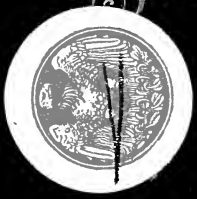
# SKETCHES IN SONG



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# SKETCHES IN SONG

BY

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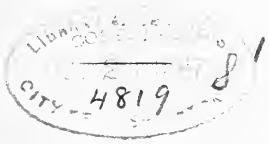


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# SKETCHES IN SONG.

## A FISH STORY

FOR THE LITTLE CRITICS.

A STRANGE fish came from an inland home
On a journey out to the sea.
He split the ripples, and ript the foam,
And danced and dived in glee.
"Ho, ho!" cried the fry where the sea grew near,
"Hurrah for a fresh-water fool!
One gulp of our salt when he comes out here
Will send him back to his pool."

The fish was fleet, but the bar was high,
And the low tide roil'd and dim;
And he groped, as he slowly pass'd the fry,
And to and fro would swim.
"Ho, ho!" cried they, as they shook their scales,
"The muddled one misses his way!"
And they fann'd their fins, and slash'd their tails—
"Aha, he here will stay!"

The fish press'd on, till the way grew clear;
Then plung'd out under the spray;
And shower'd his fins in a white-cap near
That rivall'd the rays of the day.
"Ho, ho, showing off to the sharks!" cried the fry;
"And look—a gull on the shoal.
Yon surface-shiner had better be shy;
The bird will swallow him whole."

The fish sped on, till the sea grew deep,
Then, plunging down through the blue,
A flash came back from a parting leap,
As at last he sank from view.
"Ho, ho," cried the fry, "we can all do that,
If we only go out with the tide."
But the tide had gone, so, left on the flat,
They fried in the sun, and died.

---

## UNVEILING THE MONUMENT.

### I.

THE monument stands, no longer the care
Of mallet and chisel and plummet and square.
With a flourish of trumpets and rolling of drums
The glad hour comes

When the statue above it will loom unveil'd.
Lo, now the crowds that are under it sway;
The bugles are sounding; and look!—away
The veil is dropt!—and afar is hail'd,
With wild huzzas and hands that fly,
The form of the man that stands on high.

II.

How the crowd are cheering! but, ah, their cheer
Recalls a day
When few were here;
And the most of them daintily shrank away,
Afraid a foot or a frill to smear
In the mire of this place, while deep in the clay
The soil was dug for the monument here.

III.

And was there not, when his course began,
While clearing the ground for the life he had plann'd,
A time this crowd would have shrunk from the man
Whose image is now enthroned by the land?
Alas, how oft in youth's chill morn
Their tears alone are the dews that adorn
The natures that wake
To the light of a day beginning to break!

And oft how long, ere the light will burst,
The fogs of the bogs surround them first!
And oh, how many and many a tomb
Of a dead hope, buried and left in gloom,
Must mark the path of the man whose need
Is taught through failure how to succeed!
And oft how long, ere he knows of this,
Will hard work doom
His heart that in sympathy seeks for bliss
To a life as lone as death in a tomb,
Where sweetness and light
Are all shut out,
Nor a flower nor a bird
Is heeded or heard,
Nor often, if ever, there comes a sight
Of a friend who cares what he cares about,
Or is willing to soil
A finger with even a touch of his toil!
For our race are too ready to turn with a sneer
From arms that are brawny, and hands that smear.
While a man is dependent, in need of a friend,
The world is a snob, and shuns its own peer.
When a man is a master, his need at an end,
The world is a sycophant, cringing to cheer.
Cheer on, wise world, but, oh! forget not,
Whatever encouragement each man got
When in gloom and doubt his course began,
But little he heard from the lips of man.

IV.

But the monument knew a different day,
When masons with mallet and mortar wrought here
The firm and deep foundation to lay.
Still few would turn from the well-trod way
To climb the mounds of marble and clay
Which hid the work; or, if some drew near,
They only came with a stare of surprise,
Or a shrug or sigh for its form or size.

V.

That man, too, now on the monument resting,—
How long and hard life's basis to lay,
Strove he, while about him was nothing suggesting
The meed that the present is proud to pay!
When his sailing is over, the shouts of a state
That hail a Columbus may name him great.
Before it is over, that isle of the west,
The goal of his quest,
Is merely, for most, the point of a jest.
Nor a few, the while he turns to his mission,
Conceive him moved by a mean ambition.
Ay, often indeed, the nobler the claims
Inspiring his aims,
The more earth deems
They are selfish schemes
Of a Joseph it hates for having strange dreams.

Alas, where hate
Is a normal state,
Who serves the world with a love that is great
Is misunderstood by those who refuse it,
Or else disliked by those who use it ;
For he, forsooth, he knew of their need
In the day they knew not how to succeed !—
And thus this man in the marble wrought on,
Life's fruit fell off, and the fall frost froze,
And the winter of life came, weary and wan,
Ere words to welcome his worth arose.
Wise souls, the one who is now your boast
Heard few of your cheers, when needing them most :
The pride of his youth in his life or its plan,
It came not then from the praise of man.

VI.

But the monument grew, anon to display
Above its foundation,
Those fair white sides that rose to their station,
All cunningly wrought into tablet and column.
Then children, and others, as childlike as they,
Would delight in its beauty ; but, doubtful and solemn,
The wise shook their heads. "A man cannot rate
A work till complete," said they, "so we must wait."

VII.

And thus the man grew,
And thus did a few
Find, thoughtfully wrought for the wants they divined,
His work that is now the pride of his kind.
Who prized it at first?—
'T is those little verst
In the codes of the present who turn from them all
To the herald that comes to trump a new call.
Those nearest their youth
Live nearest to breasts that glow with the truth,
And welcome it gratefully warm from the heart.
Earth's elders and sages,
Away from the place where the new must start,
Scarce ever can prize
A spring that supplies
A draft less far from its font than their age is.
No deeds can course
From as grand a source
As those in which they in their youth took part.
Naught sparkles so bright
To them as the light
Of an old, cold, frozen, and crystallized art.
But, ah, if you ask them what was true
When the words or the ways of their art were new,
If you ask them what were the traits it would show
Ere the form now frozen had ceast to flow,

Or how it differ'd in nature from those
That spring in the present, when first it rose,—
All this their critic cares not to know.
He is nothing if not the dog of his day,
Who barks or who licks
As his master, the world, may make him obey
By throwing him bones or swinging him kicks.
Pray, what can he know till all the world know it!
If currents in view
Are to crystallize too
Like things of the past, the winter will show it.
The future must rate
The fruit of the present: so shrewd men wait,
And but of the dead
Are their eulogies said.—
Good souls, they never will let one rest
Until he has pass'd to the land of the blest!
No heart is aglow
With the burning zeal of a holiest mission,
But makes them fearful of heat below,
And tremble in dread of a fiend's apparition.
For Satan has toils that, no matter whether
Come evil or good, trap all men together.
Whenever one spies
Light coming, he cries
"'T is naught but a will-o-the wisp to the wise."
Some trust him, and some, not duped by his lies,
Begin to dispute them; and then, at the quarrel,
The seer of the light has thorns for his laurel.

Ay, rare, indeed, in that day is his fate,
If the eye of the prophet, his noblest trait,
Escape from censure and scorn and hate.
For an eye like his a goal pursues
So far in advance of his time and its views,
That only the march of an age, forsooth,
O'ertakes the vision he sees in his youth.
But, oh ! in that age, when it comes, the earth
Will live in his light and know of his worth.
And many and many will be the men
Who move on then,
And about them view
The scenes that he in his day saw too,
Who, sure of his presence, will know he is nigh,
And feel he is living, and never can die.
This man of the monument lived like that.
Men cheer him now ; but of old they sat
In judgment against him ; while, far away
From the place where they had chosen to stay,
He push'd for the light ; and grew old and hoar
Ere the lives about him had learn'd to explore,
And seek what he sought. Alone in the van,
He had fail'd of aid had he look'd to man.

VIII.

Yet now it is different ; justice is done.
His statue behold in the gleam of the sun,
Amid drumming and trumpeting, chorus and
song,

The praise of the speaker, and shouts of the throng,
Throned white o'er the waving of plumes and of flags
That surge to its base as a sea to her crags.
Now cheer we the monument, capp'd and clear'd,
So cheer we the man for whom it is rear'd.

IX.

What? cheer we the man?
No doubt, in youth
There were times when the joy in his heart overran
At a smile from one who knew him in truth;
There were times, years later, when merely a tear
From a grateful eye
Would have seem'd more dear
Than all the glitter that gold could buy;
But, alas! in age, when character stands
As fix'd as yon monument, then it demands,
Ere aught can move it, far more, far more
Than the cheer or the sigh that had stirr'd it of yore.
Not oft, nor till ages of suns and storms
Have wrought with the verdure in earthly forms,
Are they turn'd into stone, no more to decay.
But often on earth
The owners of worth

That men image in marble grow stony, that way.
Ah, man, whom in weakness you might make a friend
And turn from—beware, beware in the end,
Lest he whom you harden grow hard unto you.
O world, when ready your hero to cheer,
How heeds he your welcome? say, what does he do?
His eye, does it see? his ear, does it hear?
His heart, does it throb? his pulse, does it thrill?
Or his touch, is it cold? his clasp, is it chill?—
O world, you have waited long; what have you done?
O man, you have wrought so long; what have you won?—

X.

That monument there,
So white, so fair,
Where now, at last, the praise is said,
Is only a tomb. They are cheering the dead.

XI.

Did the man they seek to praise know it all?
Had he look'd, in his youth,
Past the shadows of form to the substance of truth?
Had he learn'd that all life has its seasons, and shifts
From winter and spring into summer and fall?

Or divin'd that eternity, balancing gifts,
Grants honor like heaven, a state after strife,
And a glorified name to a sacrificed life?
Did he know that sighs, when yearning for love,
Best open one's soul to breathe in from above
The air immortal, and make it worth while
That art should chisel in marble clear
The lines divine that temper a smile
Beyond the sway of a mortal's cheer?—
Did he know it or not, perchance for his good
His work was lonely and misunderstood.
Perchance it was well, the best for his soul,
Its nature, its nurture, that aught to control
The aims inspiring his life or its plan
Had gain'd but little from earth or man.

---

## UNDER THE NEW MOON.

THE hills rang back our parting jest;
The dear, dear day was over;
The sun had sunk below the west;
We walk'd home through the clover.
Our words were gay, but thought astray
Our parting kept regretting,—
"The old old way!" it seem'd to say;
"The suns are always setting."
Then, gazing back with longing soon,
At once my step grew bolder;

For, bright and new, I spied the moon
Just over my right shoulder.

I turn'd about and bade her look ;
We were not superstitious ;
We jok'd about that shining hook,
Bright bait, and skies auspicious.
We joked, but, oh, I thought with woe,
"This bright bait lures me only,
Like more before it doom'd to go,
And leave life dark and lonely.
Past yon horizon, earth is strewn
With broken moons," I told her :
"Each bore a bright hope, too, each moon,
When over my right shoulder.

"Alas to trust in each new light,
A man were moonstruck, surely,—
A lunatic !"—We laugh'd outright,
And then walk'd on demurely.
But soon, just shown, the old moon's zone
Made round and full the new one ;
I thought, "Would my old love, made known,
Show my new hope a true one ?—
What would she say ?"—I ask'd her soon,
And took her hand to hold her.
"Ah, love," she sigh'd, "to-night the moon
Is over my right shoulder."

## ALL IN ALL.

BE calm, O Wind, and gently blow,
Nor rouse the waves' commotion.
Ye Clouds, veil not the bay so low :
My love sails o'er the ocean.

Out, boatman, out ! The wind will rise ;
The yawl will find it stormy.
Ay, thrice thy fee.—Her signal flies.—
My love is waiting for me.

Blow on, ye Winds : and mope, thou drone ;
Who cares for wave or weather ?
My love, my own ! no more alone,
We walk the shore together.

---

## NOTHING AT ALL.

SO many eyes that dim tears fill,
Cheer'd by no loved one's face ;
So many ears a breath could thrill,
Left in the still, chill space ;

So many hearts that beat to greet
Love that will heed no sign ;
So many lips that part to meet
Love that is air, like mine ;—

Dykes that fashion has bank'd so fast,
Burst from our souls apart!
Burst! and let the truth flow past,
Filling each unfill'd heart.

---

## THE IDEALIST.

I HEAR fair Fancy call'd a guide
Who smiles when one is youthful,
But oft in sudden shades will hide,
And prove at times untruthful.
"When through the skies,"
They say "she flies
And leaves behind each earthly care;
When round about her in the air
No danger seems attending
The sunlight she is wending,
Beware! amid the brightest air
The storm may burst, the lightning tear,
Beware and fear!
With earth so near
None can be free from care."

I hear fair Fancy call'd a guide
Of rarest grace and beauty;
But prone to lead the soul aside

From irksome paths of duty.
"Man is but man:
He cannot scan
Too high delights, and highly rate
The lowly joys of earth's estate.
A soul to fancy turning,"
They say, "is fill'd with yearning;
And lives in dreams and idle schemes,
That with their lure of rival gleams
Make dim the light
About the sight
The working soul esteems."

I hear fair Fancy call'd a guide
Oft rendering life distressful,
With views that loom too high, too wide,
To make a man successful.
"Tho' poets stray
With her," they say,
"Earth only shoos or shoots a bird;
To draw its wealth, it yokes the herd.—
But few are those not tiring
Of natures too aspiring.
The common leaders of the day
Amid the common people stay,
Who but confide
In those that guide
Along the common way."

And yet my dear and dangerous guide,
I prize thy peerless beauty.
I chose thee long ago my bride
For love and not for booty.
How much is wrought
By risking naught?
When I behold a path of bliss,
Tho' bordering on the worst abyss,
My fears of falling under
Will not restrain my wonder.
And, from what thou hast shown to me,
Full many a truth my soul can see
That earth must know
Ere it forego
Its need of knowing thee.

---

## A PHASE OF THE ANGELIC.

I WONDER not that artists' hands,
Inspired by themes of joy
To picture forms of angel-bands,
Are moved to paint the boy.

I know, if I the task were given
To lure a man's desires
By what appears the nearest heaven,
When most his thought aspires,

I would not take a blushing bride,
For she may wed for pelf;
Nor him who clasps her to his side,
He may but love himself;

Nor matron, with her thoughts confined
To precepts preach'd to youth;
Nor man mature: too oft his mind
Is closed to others' truth.

But I would blend the purity
Of her whom I adore
With manly power for mastery
And promise yet in store.

So I would take the boy who roams
Toward life, half understood,
From thresholds of those holy homes
That face alone the good;—

A boy who has not reach'd the brink
Where vice will cross his track,
Whose wish that loathes the wish to drink
Still keeps the tempter back;—

A boy who hardly knows of ill,
Or ill can apprehend,
With cheeks that blush, with eyes that fill,
And faith that fears no end.

And oh, I know that those who love
The purest part of joy,
Would choose with me from all above
The heaven that held my boy.

---

## THE BELLE.

A SMILE—could it be meant for me?—
Yet there she stood before me.
But she had charm'd so many eyes
And I was neither rich nor wise,—
The belle of all the town was she:
I seem'd a child,
She only smiled
Because she knew her mien was mild,
While mine confusion bore me.

And praise—could it be meant for me?—
Ah, how could I suppose it?
The rarest minds I knew about
Had held her gauge of them in doubt.
A prize beyond us all was she;
But young was I;
And this was why
She thought my pride to gratify;
Yet I could but disclose it.

A blush—could it be meant for me?—
Yet thus she met no other.
A face that all with joy would meet,
Could it have blush'd my own to greet?
A belle whom all had sought was she;
Yet I could see
Heave silently
A sigh that strove and would be free.
I spoke to free another.

She answer'd—All was meant for me—
For me, her low tones proving;
And all my love had burst in flame
To feel their ardor while they came.
"A woman, whosoe'er she be,
Is nothing more,
O loved of yore,
Than just a woman, nothing more,
And can but love the loving."

---

## THE POET'S REASON.

I LIVE to write; and write, good friend,
In part, I know, for you;
Though, while I do so, in the end
Myself it pleases too.

"The world," you think, "may prize my rhymes."
The world—who knows its mood?—
Ah, many and many have been the times
I only deem'd them good.

I "love to write"? You near the truth.
I love to talk, as well;
And poems speak a part, forsooth,
Of what the soul would tell.—

Ay, ay, the soul. For it how meet
That those it loves should see—
Not poems—but the poem sweet
That all one's life would be!

---

## AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

MY mountains, how I love your forms that stand
So beautiful, so bleak, so grim, so grand.
Your gleaming crags above my boyhood's play,
Undimm'd as hope, rose o'er each rising day.
When now light hope has given place to care,
O'er steadfast toil I see you steadfast there.
And when old age at last shall yearn for rest,
By your white peaks will each aspiring glance be blest.

How bright and broad with ever fresh surprise,
The scenes ye brought allured my youthful eyes!
Now, when rude hands those scenes of old assail,
When growing towns have changed the lower vale,
When other friends seem lost or sadly strange,
Ye stand familiar still, ye do not change.
And when all else abides as now no more,
In you I still may see the forms I loved of yore.

Ye mounts deserve long life. Your peaks at dawn
Catch light no sooner from the night withdrawn,
Than those ye rear see truth, when brave men vow
To serve the serf, and bid the despot bow.
In vales below, if tyrants make men mild,
The weak who scale your sides learn winds are wild,
That beasts break loose from bonds, and birds
are free,
And, while they rest from danger, dream of liberty.

High homes of freedom, human lips can phrase
No tribute fit to echo half your praise.
By Waldus' church and Ziska's liberty,
By Swiss and Scot who left their children free,
By our New England, when she named him knave
Who, flank'd by bloodhounds, chased his fleeing
slave,
Stand ye like them, whose memories, ever grand,
Tower far above earth's lords, as ye above its land.

Ay, stand like monuments in lasting stone
To souls as lofty as the world has known.
Ye fitly symbol, when with kindling light
The dawn and sunset gild your summits white,
The glories of their pure, aspiring worth
Who aim'd at stars to feed the hopes of earth ;
And fitly point where they, when earth is pass'd,
View grander scenes than yours from heights that ever last.

---

## MARTIN CRAEGIN.[1]

UP, thou Warden gray of Honor,
Swing thy temple's rusted door ;
Hither from the mine of Pittston,
Hies, at last, one hero more.

* * * * * *

[1] "Martin Cooney," [I have found, upon making inquiry at Pittston, that the boy's name was Craegin, not Cooney] "is the name of the boy who, deep down in the horrid depths of the Pittston mine, performed a deed of heroic self-sacrifice which shames into insignificance the actions by which many happier men have climbed to fame and honor. Cooney and a companion stood at the bottom of the shaft as the car was about to ascend for the last time. High above them roaring flame and blinding smoke amid the crash of falling timber were fast closing up the narrow way to light and life; below them in the gloomy pit were a score of men working on, unconscious of their deadly peril. Cooney, with one foot upon the car, thought of his endangered friends. He proposed to his companion that they should return and warn the miners of their threatened fate. His companion refused to go, and then Cooney, without a moment's hesitation, but with full consciousness that he had chosen almost certain death, leaped from the car and groped his way back through the growing darkness. It was too late; the miners had closed the ventilating door before he reached them; and standing there between the immovable barrier and the shaft, the hot breath of the fiery pit poured in upon him in a pitiless blast, and so he died."—*Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, June 5, 1871.

While he toil'd amid the miners,
Came a cry that startled him;
"Fire!" he heard, and o'er him quickly,
Saw the smoking shaft grow dim.

"Now for life!" a comrade shouted,
"Mount this car, the last to go!"
"Nay for life," replied young Martin,
"Call the men at work below!"

Cried the first: "No time to tarry!
Look!—The flames!—We must not stay!"
"Time for them to close the smoke out!"
Martin cried, and rush'd away.

"Fire! fire! fire!" he shouted shrilly,
Groping down the passage dim.
"Fire!" those heard, and closed the passage
Closed it on the smoke and him.

"Stop the smoke!" cried men above him.—
Still the ghastly fumes sped on;
Caught the boy, and, crawling round him,
Choked the corpse they clung upon.

"Woe on woe!" cried those above him,
"All will die; the fires descend!"

By the coal-pit, by the coal-boy,
Never light like that was kenn'd.

Whence, O whence that blinding brightness?
What had touch'd the boy afar?—
For the chariot of Elijah
Had he spurn'd his comrade's car?

"Stop the fire!" cried all the village,—
Ah, but none could now control
What amid the fire had broken
From the mine in Martin's soul.

Not the flood that men set flowing
Faster than the fire could spread,
Now could quench the flame eternal
Burning in the life that sped.

Not the cloud of smoke that gather'd,
Not the dark, sad funeral pall,
Now could dim the boy's devotion,
With its glory gilding all.

* * * * *

Up, thou Warden gray of Honor,
Wheels immortal sweep the sky,
Swing thy gates!—another hero
Love incites to do and die.

## OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

WHAT has a child that a man has not,
When "of such is the kingdom of heaven"?
At play in his home, at work in his school,
Oh, what does he care for the soul, as a rule,
Or when for the right has he striven?
Ay, what does he serve but his own desires,
Impell'd by a fancy that toils or tires?
His moods flow on like currents in brooks,
Or ruffled or smooth, to answer the crooks.
All things that are sweet or fair to see
He bustles and buzzes about like a bee.
He would work his arms at ball and bow,
Though he never had known it would make them grow.—
What virtue is his?—While a man could feel
The truth forever, nor heed its appeal,
The child retains, unfetter'd by lies,
A faith that he never has learn'd to despise,
Expression that knows no other control
Than that of the Maker who moves his soul,
A beauty of wisdom that works to obey
A holy, because a natural way;
And that may he have that a man may not.

What has a man that a child has not,
When "of such is the kingdom of heaven"?

Oh, he has been train'd by the world and its
schools
To curb his character in by rules
Till to rules his life is given.
A man like that would spurn to find
In God's designs the quest of his mind.
He crams and drams for an appetite
That nothing on earth can sate or excite.
His words are as dry as the words of a book,—
Your sentence is ready, wherever you look.
His views—he never saw any thing strange:
If he did, some fellow might doubt his range.
And all of profit he tests by pelf,
And all of manhood measures by self,
Forgets that God rules the world he is at,
And stars himself as its autocrat.
Alas for reason with such a judge!
If ever you whisper or wink or budge—
You may study and ponder and prove and pray—
But he has a most disagreeable way;
And that may he have that a child has not.

What has a man that a child has too,
When "of such is the kingdom of heaven"?
He knows that life is better'd by rules,
But he knows how split the wise and the fools,
When judging of rules that are given.
He feels that life worth living proceeds

From nature that prompts the bent of deeds;
And he lets the reins of his being go,
Whenever his soul moves evenly so.
If he looks to God through self or His Book,
Or pointing the way through a bishop's crook,
He welcomes the merit of that which is new,
Though it grew outside of his Timbuctoo.
For modest he is, and loves to find
Earth blest by minds that differ in kind.
In short, to the simple, the frail, and the true
He is fill'd with charity through and through;
And, waiving your reason its right of control,
Trusts God for enough truth left in your soul;
And though he may tell you he doubts your way,
He has something to love in spite of his "nay";
And that may a man and a child have too.

---

## MY LOVE IS SAD.

MY love is sad, "all gloom," you say;
Yet think! when I had spied her,
The flowers that made her bower so gay
Had lost their light beside her.
Ah, could my darling see it so,
And gloomy seem? No, no; no, no.

My love is weary, wandering;
Yet I, who sped to find her

With worlds of fancies on the wing,
  Saw all fall far behind her.
Ah, could my darling see it so,
And weary seem? No, no; no, no.

My love is lone and weeps, I see;
  Yet here I wait to win her,
For what is all the world to me,
  My arms are clasping in her.
Ah, could my darling see it so,
And lonely seem? No, no; no, no.

---

## MY DREAM AT CORDOVA.

### I.

NIGHT bade me rest. I left the street,
  Its faces fair and answers sweet;
And dear and human seem'd the town
Beside which I had laid me down.
But, ere I slept, the rising moon,
From skies as blue as if 't were noon,
Pour'd forth her light in silvery streams,
Eclipsing all my light of dreams.
And soon, as if some power would shake
My drowsy eyes till wide-awake,
The walls were spray'd with showers of light,
Whose flickerings left a fountain bright

That toss'd the moonbeams in its play,
And dash'd and flash'd their gleams away.
I just could see the fountain flow
Within a marble court[1] below.
It seem'd a spirit, clothed in white,
But half reveal'd to mortal sight,
Whose sparkling robes flew in and out
O'er dainty limbs that danced about,
And touch'd the ground with throbs as sweet
As if the tread of fairy feet;
While round about the fount-sent shower,
That strung with pearls each grateful flower,
Rare fragrance rose from bush and bower.

II.

Ere long across the marble court
Soft laughter rang and calls of sport,
And maidens pass'd the entering gate,
Whose voices rose in sweet debate,
So clear, so pure, they might have sprung
From moonlight, not from mortal tongue.
I lay there charm'd, my eyelids closed,
And sought to sleep; but, ere I dozed,
Took one look more. Alas for me!
The moon had moved to make me see,

[1] "A thoroughly national hotel . . . I look down from my window through marble colonnades . . . perfumed with the scent of . . . trees, which bend . . . over a richly sculptured fountain."—*Hare's Wanderings in Spain*, pp. 93, 94.

In dreamlike light where slept the day,
Vague forms that join'd those maids at play.
They linger'd there, half hid by trees
And sprawling cactus ; now at ease,
Now whirling off in shadowy sets
Where urged guitars[2] and castonets.[2]
Anon, this music rose and fell,
As if, because 't was fill'd so well,
So laden down with sweets before,
The languid air could hold no more.
" Ah, how could it or I ? " I thought ;
" This land of endless spring is fraught
With charms that pale by living truth
The brightest dreams that lured my youth."
Then, while the music heaved my breast,
The thought it cradled sank to rest.

III.

I slept and dreamt. To you it seems
No censor, swung to souls in dreams
Before the mind's most holy shrine,
Rear'd there to memories most divine,
Could incense hold whose fumes could rise
And dim what bless'd my closing eyes.
You think my soul most surely thought
Of Cordova in dreams it brought.
You think that once again it calms

[2] Instruments found everywhere in Spain.

My mood to watch beneath the palms
The ancient river [3] freshly lave
Rome's ruined bridge [3] that naught could save.
You think, once more, my wonder wends
Across that orange-court [4] and bends
In that cathedral-mosk,[5] in which
A thousand [5] shafts with sculptures rich
Surround the soul like ghosts of trees
Beyond the touch of time or breeze,
While every shaft seems rear'd to speak,
In jasper, porphyry, verdantique,
Of skill that train'd its artist's hand
In grand old times that blest this land
Before the Moorish suns had set
On days that earth can ne'er forget.
Nay, nay, I dreamt with joy intense,
But did not heed a hint from thence.

## IV.

You think my spirit rose to flights,
Aspiring past all present sights,

[3] "The bridge over the Guadalquivir . . . composed of sixteen arches . . . very picturesque . . . built by Octavius Cæsar."—*O'Shea's Guide to Spain.*

[4] "What spot can be more delightful than the grand old court, surrounded by flame-shaped battlements . . . beneath huge orange trees planted some three hundred years ago."—*Hare's Wanderings in Spain*, p. 88.

[5] "From the court you step with bewilderment into a roofed-in forest of pillars . . . amid the thousand still remaining columns of varied color, thickness, and material, which divide the building into twenty-nine naves one way and nineteen the other. Into the midst of all a cathedral was engrafted in 1547." (It was built originally for a mosk.)—*Idem*, p. 89.

Invoking from the grave of time
The heroes of this city's prime,—
The great Gonsalvo[6] mail'd for war,
Or Ferdinand [7] the conqueror ?—
You think I saw, 'midst torches bright,
The turban bow beneath the sight
Of chieftains marshall'd, far and near,
With drifting plume and flashing spear,
Like cloud and lightning sent to sweep
Abdillah's[7] Moors across the deep ?—
You think I trod these streets in days
When Califs vied to sound their praise,
And term'd the town that seem'd so blest
" The grander Bagdad of the west " [8] ;
Or trod them, when it gave the Goth
His " Home of holiness and troth " [8] ;
Or, long ere through its children's veins
Flow'd Roman [9] blood to richen Spain's,
Beheld it named by every mouth,
" The matchless gem of all the south " ? [8]—
Nay, nay, I dreamt with joy intense,
But did not heed a hint from thence.

[6] Gonsalvo de Cordova, called " the great captain," born 1443.
[7] Ferdinand of Aragon, whose forces, setting out from Cordova, drove Abu-Abdıllah, or Boabdil, the kıng of the Moors, from Granada in 1492.
[8] Titles applied to the city in different periods of its history,—when inhabited by the Moors, the Goths, and before the Romans conquered it.
[9] Referring to the " blue blood " of the Spanish aristocracy, supposed to be indicative of Roman ancestry.

V.

It must have been Spain's endless spring
That gave my winter'd fancies wing ;
And brought to life a long-lost love
That these essay'd to brood above.
How throbb'd my heart to see once more
That face, that form, that friend of yore !
Again my arms were round that neck ;
And cheek to cheek without a check
Our souls had met. O Love, long cold,
What frame had hoped to feel, when old
And used to well-bound loads of pain,
The warmth of youth thrill every vein !
The lost delight was all too dear.
With heart aglow, as dawn drew near,
To him who slept amid the past,
A Spanish sky seem'd overcast.

VI.

Bright Sun, I sigh'd, no light can gleam
Beside true love and be supreme !
Fair Spain, no realm so fair may be ;
But love recall'd unsexes thee.
Nay, no land shows one sunlit scene
That rose-like bursts from earth's wide green,
But brings an image swept away

When eyelids close at close of day.
'T is but the impress mind receives,
That, sunn'd or sombre, never leaves.
Ah, if the past must always cope
With future joys for which we hope,
How vain the aims that make their quest
A life that merely shall be blest,
And slight earth's meed of lowly sweets
For purple heights and golden streets!
Faith fails that merely waits below.
Dreams after death would bring but woe
Without remember'd love that blest
The soul before it found its rest.

## VII.

Keep, Cordova, thy rare renown.
The veils of twilight, falling down,
Could fold around no fairer town;
Yet many a sight, where came the night,
To this, my soul, had seem'd as bright.
I left thee sad; but bore away,
With light to linger night and day,
And charms divine as thine to me,
The dream that came to rival thee.

## THE FLOWER PLUCKED.

"YOU say you leave forever?
Our walks and talks have had their day?
You say this flower blooms not to stay,
Nor friendship;—we must sever?—
Alas, to think my favorite flower,
That so delay'd its blooming hour
Through all the stormy weather,
Through March and April, May and June,
Has open'd now to close so soon!
Nay, nay; it shall not fail me so.
I 'll make it feel, if but my blow."—
She spoke, and smote the tender stalk
Where grew the flower that graced the walk;
And both flew off together.

"Not so," he cried; "nay, never.
Forgive it! Spare the flower! alas!"
And knelt and pick'd it from the grass.
"What, did she love thee ever?
If so the blow she gave to thee
Has made thee doubly dear to me.
Ah, Flower, in sunny weather,
And not in March, nay, nay, in June
Thy leaves in opening brought this boon;
Nor so shall close! There waits for thee
One mission more, thy best to be!"

He spoke, and placed the fallen flower
Against his heart—and so that hour
The maid and flower together.

---

## THE ARTIST'S AIM.

IN candor, my friend, you seem too much at home
With gods of Olympus and nymphs of old Rome.
The world has advanced, and the artist, if sage,
Will seek to give form to the thoughts of his age.
The curve of a limb and the pose of a head
May be all the same in the living as dead;
But she that you woo, must have life and be young
And speak, ere you love her, and speak your own tongue.

Truth only is lasting, and only the face
Transfigured by it has a lasting grace.
And truth is in nature, nor flows second-hand
Through art, though most artful to fill the demand.
So think of the present, its deeds and its dreams,
As Raphael thought, but not Raphael's themes;
Nor be a Venetian to picture like Titian
A woman to worship or goddess to kiss.
You are a new-world's man: model from this.

Ay, let the dead bury their dead, and pursue
The aims of a people that push for the new.

The proudest ambition, the readiest hand,
Might wisely embody ideals less grand ;
No sweeter Murillo's divinest designs,
Whose purity rivals each thought it refines,
While the dreamy intent of a life-brooding haze
Throngs thick with the beauty of immature praise.
Conceptions immaculate still may be
In the pure white light that he could see,
Inspired to incarnate a soul in each plan,
The life of a picture as well as of man.

The wants of the present, one never can gauge
By the heathenish tastes of a heathenish age.
The mummy lived once, and spoke as it ought.
We moderns, forgetting its life and its thought,
For lost art sighing, too oft re-array
What is only a corpse, and ought to decay.
E'en if it were living, long centuries fraught
With progress in action and feeling and thought
Outgrow the old charms, and make the world crave
New phases of art that the past never gave.

So I fear, when I see men striving to mold
The forms of the new after those that are old,
While all true life grows better and better,
That classical models a modern may fetter.
Small virtue has one with no hope in his heart,
And little of merit, if none in his art.

While only the light of a coming ideal
Lures those to the good who imagine it real,
No work can ever inspire the earth,
That embodies no promise of unfulfill'd worth,
And naught that the world deems worthy of fame,
In art as in act, but is rank'd by its aim.

---

## MUSICIAN AND MORALIZER.

WHAT am I "doing," night and day,
Loitering here with the flute?—
Doing?—why blowing my plaints away,
Off, till I blow them mute.

"Foolish" am I?—It may be so.
Who, forsooth, are the wise?
I to the wind my sorrows blow:
Others hoard up their sighs.

"Useless" am I?—The while I play,
Many another one's heart
Throbs to my melody, till, they say,
All of his woes depart.

Nothing of sweetness fills the air,
Nothing of beauty blooms,

Save as a vision of life more fair
Over the spirit looms.

Listen to this now—mine and thine.
How could I show more worth,
Than as a reed for a breath divine,
Blowing from heaven to earth?

"Music-mad" am I?—Have your say,
Whether you blame or applaud,
I the behest of my soul obey,
Just as it came from God.

---

## WHAT THE BOUQUET SAID.

FOR one who would himself be here,
And for ourselves who hold you dear,
We come, fair maid, to welcome you.
For sun-bright eyes like yours we grew,
And learn'd to flush with ardor meet
In soil aglow to feel your feet.
And up to you, our fragrance rare
Is breathed from lips that burst in prayer.
Our sister, mistress, goddess sweet,
This meeting leaves our lives complete.
Now dew may fail, or frost may sear,
We fade, we die; but have been here.

## WITH THE YOUNG.

OUR struggles with the world, I know,
Are blessings in disguise.
No honors that elsewhere earth can show
Outshine its victor's prize.
Yet, when, with naught their course to guide,
My feelings freely well,
My thoughts will turn to souls untried,
And with the young I dwell.

Why ask a feeling the reason why?—
One's lot may have been too hard.
Those loved in youth, as years go by,
May rouse no more regard.
Who knows how many in age may fall
Whose steps all deem'd secure?
Who knows how many can trip at all
And ever again be pure?

Perchance through each sweet childish face
Speaks some one loved of yore,
A form whose young and tender grace
Beside me moves no more;
And yet a form that waits for me,
Where still, as hope maintains,
What has been, is, or is to be,
In a changeless state remains.

Perchance, I share in heaven's delight
Whose saints recall the past,
And guide, at times, in robes of white,
Earth's young through gloom and blast.
But leave the cause still undivined,
When feelings freely well,
The young have claims no others find,
And with the young I dwell.

---

## A TRANSLATION.[1]

O'ER Santiago's happy homes
The parting sun delay'd,
And brightly o'er its roofs and domes
In gleams of sunset play'd;
And toward the brightest dome came throngs
Of maidens hastening there;
And from them words as sweet as songs
Went pulsing through the air.
They press'd from home to seek the dome
Where oft their praise was given;
But where to-night a grander rite
Would bear their prayers to heaven.

[1] In 1864, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin was celebrated with unusual splendor in the Church de la Companiè of Santiago, Chili. In the midst of the ceremonies the draped image of the Virgin caught fire. Almost instantly the flames were communicated to ropes suspending along the ceiling upward of twenty thousand colored lamps. These fell in a rain of fire upon the audience below, burning with the church itself as many as two thousand persons, chiefly young ladies from the higher grades of society.

Within, a thousand banners bright
Would wave o'er walls ablaze ;
And priests, array'd in gold and white,
Like seraphs chant their praise.
Within, the organ's noblest strains
Would rise with incense rare ;
Ah, then, how sweet would be their gains
Who breathed that sweeter air !
Sent upward so their prayers would flow
Like fountains toward the heaven,
That far away would break in spray,
And fall in blessings given.

And soon those thousand banners bright
Did wave o'er walls ablaze ;
And priests, array'd in gold and white,
Like seraphs chant their praise—
When up there flared a flame that glared
Athwart the lamp-strung dome ;
And hot as hell its red lights fell
To fright their victims home ;
And, o'er and o'er, was heard : " The door !
O Mary, hear from heaven ! "
But oh, no more would swing that door,
On throngs against it driven.

Red lips of fire flew to and fro,
And kiss'd each maiden's cheek ;

They blush'd, but oh, too deep the glow!
They kneel'd, but oh, too meek!
Death wrapt them round in robes of flame,
Let loose their streaming hair,
And, when their souls were won, became,
Ash-white, their couch-mate fair.
Anon, the fire was raging higher.
But these were calm as heaven
Long ere the bells had wail'd farewells
When out the belfry driven.

O'er Santiago's mourning homes
The morning sunbeams stray'd,
And found, where once of all its domes
The brightest crown'd the shade,
Four hundred carts of corpses charr'd,
Two thousand nameless dead,
And scores of thousands weeping hard
For souls so sadly fled.
And all around the smoking ground,
From hearts whose depths were riven,
Low sighs of prayer were rising there
Beneath the dome of heaven.

---

## FARMER LAD.

FARMER lad, in the morning gray,
Blest may seem the town, and they,
Slumbering late, who, void of blame,
Seek at their leisure wealth and fame;

But how many there, thy race would run
To know thy rest when the day is done!

Farmer lad, when the herd's faint bells
Clink far off o'er the sunburnt fells,
Better may seem the coin that calls
Ringing and bright from the town's cool halls;
But how many there, would give all its gleams
For the golden light of thy guileless dreams!

Farmer lad, where the herd will drink
Waits a maid that bathes by the brink
Bare brown feet; and the rill, made sweet,
Thrills to touch her who thee would greet.
There is more for thee in the blue of her eye
Than in all the towns that are under the sky.

---

## THE WIFE.

A FACE has she, about which, all bright,
Is a constant halo of calm delight;
And her smile attracts
To genial acts
All those who live in the sunny sight.

She moves in a sphere not wholly obscure,
With ways that are not wholly mature,
But ready to go

Where friend or foe
May point the way to the wise or pure.

Her mien by every grace refined
With a welcome bends to all things kind;
But something true
To duty too
Remains unbent in her inner mind.

Her soul seeks not the name of wife,
To sit by a plume, or the prize of a strife.
She longs to share
Not the outward glare,
But the inward glow of her husband's life.

Ah, like the sky encircling the sea,
Embracing his thoughts wherever they be,
She rests above
His life with a love
That binds him fast, yet leaves him free.

Toward her his thoughts in fancies rise,
Like mists aglow in the sunset skies,
And like nights here
When the stars appear,
His gloom gives way at the glance of her eyes.

Through her his hope like a morning dream
Attains a day of love supreme,

Suffused with a light
That makes earth bright,
And life what it otherwise could but seem.

Would God her soul could ever abide,
A heaven for his soul's heaving tide,
Still calm above
His restless love,
And all the storms that over it glide!

---

## NOTHING TO KEEP UNDER.

YOU envy those whom all men greet
With favors never ceasing,
The men whose ways are so discreet
Their friends go on increasing,
Whose souls get more than they deserve,
Because not oft they blunder;
But, even when unkind, have nerve
To keep unkindness under.

You envy those whose lips supply
A smile for every neighbor,
Though all his deeds may give the lie
To truth for which they labor,—
Good, easy souls, who never need
To fret in wrath or wonder,

To feel how hard is life, indeed,
With so much to keep under.

You envy those whose calm consent,
Amid all earth's mutations,
Can sail the sea of life content
With others' observations;
Who entertain no wish for strife
On shores where breakers thunder;
But hold a cautious helm to life,
And keep ambition under.

Hold friend—'t is good for which men yearn
Makes ill to them provoking;
And only zeal on fire to burn
First fills its air with smoking.
If this be so, some day, your soul
A worth world-wide may sunder
From those who have—yes, self-control,
But nothing to keep under.

---

## OUR DAY AT PISA.

WE took the train at Florence,[1] we,—
The day was warm and pleasant.
The town of Pisa would we see.
No time was like the present.

[1] The poem is supposed to be written by an American "doing" Italy.

Anon we climb'd the Leaning Tower,[2]
Dropt something down, and sat an hour ;
And then the grand Baptistry[2] door
Was swung for us ; and, o'er and o'er,
We made its domed rotunda roar,
To echo back our joking.

We set our pockets jingling, we,
To make our guide a crony,
Saw the cathedral, paid a fee,
And ate some macaroni,
Then feasted on an outside view
Of all three buildings,[2] still so new ;
Then bought, in alabaster[3] wrought,
Some models of them ; then we sought
The Campo Santo,[4] where we thought
About the dead, while smoking.

We took the train at sunset, we,
And as we left the station,
Extoll'd the land, " How much to see !
How grand this Roman nation !
Our own, how mean !—no works of art ! "
We meant to sigh, but stopt to start

[2] The Leaning Tower, the Baptistry (under the dome of which may be heard, by those who care for it, an echo, repeating itself many times), and the Cathedral are all found in one square.

[3] Alabaster worked into articles suitable for gifts is one of the chief commodities of Pisa. Great quantities of it are purchased for presents.

[4] Campo Santo or cemetery, the most famous in Italy.

And cry, " How home-like ! " o'er and o'er.—
What thrill'd us so ?—alas, it bore
No hint from art ; we heard once more
A frog, near by us, croaking.

---

## THE HIGHEST CLAIMS.

I WOKE and said : " My dream is gone,
And gone each eager guest,
Whose urgency, from eve to dawn,
Deprived me of my rest.
One call'd me ruler of the land ;
One chief of hosts enroll'd ;
One brought me wealth ; one bade my hand
A pen immortal hold ;
But none spake aught of aims I thought
More blest than theirs could be ;
And, leading on to all I sought,
Still claim'd the most from me.

" To hold a sceptre in the state,
Like Moses o'er the sea,
Controlling thus a rival's fate,
Who overwhelm'd will be ;
To wield a sword in troubled times,
Till foes yield up each aim,

While hope with firmer footstep climbs
The crumbling ledge of fame,—
All this I know were well, but though
Each foe should bend the knee,
An homage grander still, I trow,
Would claim the most from me.

"To join the throngs whose struggles prove
How dear the wealth they earn;
Or those whose thought the world can move
To deeds for which they yearn;
All this were well; but gold is mined
In depths that lure below,
And thought more lasting forms can find
Than lip and line bestow.
When gem and scroll a living soul
With all its powers may be,
Naught else that might my deeds control
Can claim the most from me.

"Ah, why through all life's little day
Should drum and trumpet call,
And cluster'd smoke from many a fray
Hang o'er earth like a pall?
How small a space above each fight
Its rising thunder jars!
The echoes sleep in paths of light
Where shine unmoved the stars.

To lead to love like life above
  One's earthly work may be ;
And nothing less than perfect love
  Can claim the most from me."

I spoke, and, ere the beams of day
  Could bar him out, each guest
That I had thought had gone for aye,
  Return'd and term'd me blest.
One call'd me ruler of the land ;
  One chief of hosts enroll'd ;
One brought me wealth ; one bade my hand
  A pen immortal hold ;
And every voice breath'd forth : "Rejoice ;
  O soul, thy wisdom see :—
While love rules all, thy ruling choice
  Must claim the most from me."

---

## NOTES FROM THE VICTORY.

AH me, who is ringing those bells ?
  Right merry for funeral knells !
If the winds of hell could ring them as well,
  What woe would the demons lack ?
My light blew out in the gust of the rout :
  My boy will never come back.

And drums !—How lightly they roll !
Coarse drums, can they call the soul ?
Folks, out of breath, do you shout at death ?
Can you rend the tomb ?—Alack,
Vain echoes around, pale under the ground,
My boy can never come back.

Guns too ! O why do they roar ?
Alas, I thought it was o'er.
Though why fear I, though a million die,
And all of us wear but black ?
I, too, with the proud have my blood-stain'd shroud :
My boy will never come back.

Our land !—Who wants it to last !
Its future is doom'd by the past.
And the tears that rise to its mourners' eyes
Will ever dim all they track.
Chill, shivering breast, freeze, freeze into rest :
My boy will never come back.

---

## THE POET'S LESSON.

"O POET vain, put by thy pen,
Put by this dreamy mood,
Move outward through the walks of men ;
And do the world some good."

These words I heard, and waived my will,
And left my rhymes behind,
And past the sill and down the hill
Went forth my work to find.

And first I spied a romping child.
"My child," I stopt and said,
"The sun is bright; the air is mild;
Your cheeks with health are red.

"It does you good to leap and run,
And chase your mates about"—
But ah, my talk had scarce begun
Before the child cried out:

"O please, sir, please keep back, I say!
O but you spoil my sport!
O but they all will flee away,—
My prisoners, from my fort!"

I saw no foe, nor fortress wall,
My coming had attack'd.
This child, I thought, knows not at all
A fancy from a fact.

Too young is he; nor yet has learn'd
The laws of health, like me;
Nor cares to know them; so I turn'd
And left his fancy free.

A man approach'd with bending frame,
His eyes by searching task'd ;
A chance, I thought, to help one came ;
So, "What is lost?" I ask'd.

"Lost?—every thing!" he said, and frown'd ;
"Ay, every thing I sought.
All day and night, the whole week round,
My mind had track'd the thought ;

"And just had found it, but for you!"
I blush'd at this ; and he
Craved then my pardon, said, "He too
Had talk'd abstractedly."

"Nay, I," said I, "should make amend.
You seem'd to search the ground ;
And I dreamt not, who saw you bend,
That thought could there be found."

He answer'd not ; but, passing then,
His shadow bridged the way ;
The while I vow'd that not again
Would I such help essay.

With this I turn'd my footsteps where
A man long ill abode,
Assured it would do good to share
This weary sufferer's load.

"My friend," I said, "your smile is bright ;
Your pains are lessening then ;
Erelong they all will take their flight,
Your health be sound again."

"Be sound?" he ask'd ; "and can it be
That you misjudge me too ?
Ah, not the thing you deem, set free
The smile that welcomed you.

"Nay, friend, but wisdom learn from one
Who long on earth has been :
This world would leave us wrecks undone,
Were all of life the seen.

"A double life we all must live,—
Of spirit and of flesh ;
And but the former life can give
A joy forever fresh.

"Look up ; there looms a region nigh,
And there the Master is ;
And if like Him live you and I,
Then you and I live His.

"When all day long of Him I muse,
And all day with Him live,
The glory that the spirit views
Dims all that earth can give."

I heard his words, and went my way,
My lesson learn'd betimes;
No more I felt could I obey
A voice that rail'd at rhymes.

But little would our life be worth,
If fancy could not be,—
Its home, heaven's halo round the earth;
Its language, poetry.

The world of deeds whose armor gleams
May light the path to right
Far less than rays that rise in dreams,
And days that dawn at night.

God's brightest light illumes the soul;
'T is heaven that makes it wise;
And things of sense are less its goal
Than eyelids for its eyes.

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## THE MOURNER ANSWERED.

AMID the twilight's gathering gloom,
She knelt beside her babe's new tomb.
"My child," she sigh'd, "did heaven not know
How deep and dread would be my woe?
For this did nature give thee birth,
For this,—to bury thee?—O God!"

She groan'd, then started. Earth to earth,
Her lips had kiss'd the common sod.

"Amid life's flowers that fade and fall,
What need to pluck a bud so small?
With ripen'd harvests full supplied,
What need had heaven of thee?" she cried;
Then mark'd the flowers that, while she stoop'd,
E'en yet made sweet her last-brought wreath:
Each full-blown leaf had dropt or droop'd;
The buds alone bloom'd bright beneath.

"Why leave, O God," was then her moan,
"My widow'd soul still more alone?
Why wrest from life the last thing dear?
What harm that love should linger here?"
And lo, the neighboring spire above
Sent forth a sound that call'd to prayer;
And music fill'd from lips of love
The House of God whose door was there.

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## THE VACANT ROOM.

AH, treacherous star, that shone afar,
And lured my eager footseps on!
This door I pass, and find, alas,
The friend whom I had sought is gone.

O think how drear mere sands appear
To travellers worn who pray for springs.
More drear this place without the face
I sought to cheer my wanderings.

Have diamonds rare no gleams to spare
The light that their own light would shun?
Do roses droop when many a group
Of clouds crowd off the autumn sun?
The gem and rose less dull repose
When all are gone that caused their worth,
Than lip and eye when none are nigh
With smiles that break in bursts of mirth.

Are lovers wild, when maidens mild
Their wisest ways of wooing shun?
Do mothers weep, when waked from sleep
Whose dream restored a long-lost son?
Ah, scarce the man's or mother's plans
Appear so rudely overthrown,
As his whose thought in vain here sought
A word to echo back his own.

But time speeds on, and duties wan,
Like ghosts untombed, forbid my stay;
But though I go, this note shall show
The loss, my friend, you caused to-day.

It craves a thought for him who sought
A sight of eyes that light it now ;
For him who waits till kindlier fates
His hopes a kindlier fate allow.

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## THANKSGIVING DAY.

I SOUGHT the house Thanksgiving Day,
And found its inmates all away,
Save her who sat before the fire,
And, by her side, her palsied sire.

At play, betwixt her fingers white,
A needle nimbly glanced the light ;
But oft her eyes it could not stay,
To either side would glance away.

And on her right hand, open spread,
There lay the Book of God she read ;
And on her left I just could trace
An infant namesake's pictured face.

The Book of God, the housekeeper,
The babe that had been named for her,
The book and babe and she between,—
Through doors ajar I mark'd the scene.

And, while she sat before me so,
Content to share another's woe ;
A captive for her sisters gone,
Whom all their joy depended on ;

Now cheer'd to read of heavenly worth
For souls denying self on earth ;
Now moved to do the deed she should,
Lest wrong should lead that child from good ;—

Another soul, my heart felt sure
Could keep, if thus surrounded, pure,—
If there God lured his thoughts above,
And here one shared his name and love.

The scene was homely ; yes, I know,
But homely scenes may haunt one so !—
That still her sweet face with me stays,
My days are all Thanksgiving Days.

---

## A MISAPPREHENSION

NOT UNCOMMON.

IN loneliness I wander'd ;
When, lo, above me, ringing
Amid the breeze
That shook the trees,
A bird was sweetly singing.

I looked, and through the leaves could see
The warbler nod and chirp for me.
"One friend is left me yet," thought I,
And ventur'd near
His song to hear;
But when he saw me drawing nigh,
Alas, in fright
He took to flight!
Not, not for me had been his care.
He sang to greet the sunny air,
And serve his own sweet nature.

In loneliness I ponder'd;
And lo, sweet laughter woke there
The gentlest trills,
That broke in rills
About the lips that spoke there.
Through smiles and blushes burst the glee,—
And eyes that fill'd and flash'd for me.
"Her soul," I thought, "has heard my sigh";
And, drawing near,
I bade her hear
My tale of love—but from her eye
The joy had flown.
Not I alone,
Alas, not I had been her care.
She fill'd the world with sweetness there,
To serve her own sweet nature.

## AUNTY'S ANSWER.

MY child, you come, and ask me why,
The reason why I stared at you?—
Ah, darling, one can use her eye!—
Nay, did I stare?—You saw me too?

I stared, then, at these great round eyes;
And thought of all that each would see,
Of all the cares, and all the cries,
Ere you were old, you sprite, like me.

And then I saw these tiny ears,
And thought of how they both would grow,
And thrill and tremble, ere the years
Had taught them all they had to know.

I saw these dainty limbs here, too,
That run and jump and snatch and throw;
And thought how little mine can do—
Ah me, it was not always so!

And what of these things?—Nothing, dear.
You ask'd me only, that is all;
And old is aunty, old and queer;
So kiss me, child, and catch the ball.

Alas, the darling!—How could I
Tell her the thought?—It touch'd me so
To think how—were she but to die
Before she learn'd it all, you know.

## HIS LOVE'S FRUITION.

"COME, Love, be mine," the boy implored ;
And from his strong young heart there pour'd
Fresh streams of life that flush'd his face
And thrill'd his breast for Love's embrace.
"Nay, nay ; not yet," his Love replied ;
"The worth of boyhood must be tried."
So, like the spring's uncertain sun,
Love lured his hope ; but would not come.

"Come, Love, be mine," the young man pray'd,
As if some angel were the maid ;
And could with bliss have knelt beside
The only power that awed his pride.
"Nay, nay ; not yet," his Love replied ;
"For vintage time must life provide."
So brightly, like a summer sun,
Love cheer'd his way ; but would not come.

"Come, Love, be mine," the strong man urged ;
"The mounts above in cloud are merged ;
And, hand in hand with thee, my life
Will better brave the looming strife."
"Nay, nay ; not yet," his Love replied,
"The harvests wait ; the fields are wide."
So, clouded like an autumn sun,
Love veil'd her light, and would not come.

"Come, Love, be mine," the old man said;
And meekly bow'd his whiten'd head;
Then, while it sank against his breast,
"O Love, has life not won its rest?"
"I come," his Love at last replied;
And clasp'd him; but he only sigh'd.
And, faint and chill, life's wintry sun
In gold had set; his Love had come.

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## WHAT WOULD I GIVE.

WRITTEN ON A SUNDAY IN GERMANY.

THERE, where the flowers more fragrant lie,
Crushed by the crowds that have pass'd them by,
Stands a chapel; and oft from its door
Hymns of the lowly worshippers pour,
Crush'd like the flowers, I trow.
O little Church, but what would I give,
What would I give, and how would I live,
To know as thy sweet souls know!

There on the knoll, where the great trees sway
Swept by the wind they have fail'd to stay,
Bend great crowds, while organ and bell
Hail God's Host that has deign'd to dwell
Shrined in their church below.

O great Church, but what would I give,
What would I give, and how would I live,
To know as thy hush'd throngs know !

There on the cliff that chancels the park,
Nigh to the cloud where is trilling the lark,
Men and maidens dance to the lay
Blown by the blasts of the trumpeters gay,
Fluttering to and fro.
O gay Cliff, but what would I give,
What would I give, and how would I live,
To know as thy light hearts know !

There, where the sun burns all the view,
What sounds there in the boundless blue ?
Faith—is it more than a sweet despair ?
Truth—than one's own note echoed in air ?
Hope—than his dawn's bright dew ?
O hush'd Heaven, but what would I give,
How would I love, and how would I live,
To know that the soul spoke true !

# DRAMATIC.

## IDEALS MADE REAL.

### I.

IT seem'd a rare and royal friendship, ours,
The very sovereignty of sympathy ;
Begun so early too—mere lads we were—
And now I never look back there again
But, swept like shading from a hero's face
In pictures,—say of Rembrandt,—all the school
Appear in hues of dim uncertainty
Surrounding Elbert, shining in relief.

Not strange was it ; too tender was I made ;
Nor oft had felt a touch save that of age,
When moulding all my methods to its own.
Kept back from contact with rough boys at play,
Till sensitive and shrinking as a girl,
A hint of their regard could master me ;
No maiden, dreaming of her wedding day,
Could wake at morning with more trembling hopes
Than I, when looking forward to my school.
But when I reach'd it, not a Bluebeard more
Could have disturb'd a trusting bride's romance.

II.

At first, they lodged me there with such a loon !
"Our clown !" so said the boys ; and clown he was ;
Would tease all day, and tumble round all night ;
And, every morning, sure as came the sun,
Would start and rout me out, with strap in hand,
Plied like a coach-whip round my dancing shape,
Well put to blush until I dodged away.

A chum had Elbert too ; and, like my own,
A wild boy caged, who seem'd more wild at times
Through beating at his bars, a hapless wretch.
And when our happier love had flower'd in us,
Half pitying each other, half this chum,
Which pity grew, we both stood round, scarce loath
To note his own wild set inflating him
With well-blown whims that swell'd his empty pride.
Forsooth, the better bubble he could be,
The better hopes we two could have of what
Should blow him from us. Then the blow came on :—
A gust of scolding struck him, and he went,—
Obey'd the call that had been mouthed for him,—
An inn-clerk's, so I think,—and bow'd content
To sink from view like Paul, one gloomy night,
From out the window of his room ; while we,
Much giggling, flung his luggage after him.

III.

My friend, thus widow'd, caused that our school's
head,
Already nodding o'er his noonday pipe,
Should beck his sever'd dreams with one nod
more,
And so consent to our dreams.
Room-mates made,
We slamm'd his door and woke him; not our-
selves.
Our dreamland lasted, that is, when we two
Were by ourselves. When more surrounded us—
You know boy-friends are shy: is it a trait,
This shielding of their hearts, that fits them thus
For life-tilts of their manhood?—How we two
Would rasp each other when the world look'd on!
In truth, each seem'd to wear his nature's coat
The soft side inward, comforting himself,
And turn the coarse side only toward the world.
If strangers chafed against it, yet one's self
And friend were saved this.

When thus Elbert's cloak
Was mine, and mine was his, and both held one,
No proof could have convinced me in those days
His peer had ever liv'd. What seem'd in him
So mild and beautiful, was more than marks

Mere difference between a porcupine
Provok'd and peaceable. The kind was new;
Not human, so angelic. Ay, his soul,
As pure as loving, and as fine as frank,
I half believe to-day, as I did then,
Stood strange amid his comrades of the play
As dogwood, wedded to the skies of spring,
White in a wilderness of wintry pines.
Ah me, could all find all on earth so dear,
Christ's work were common. I had died for him.
In fact, to shield the rogue, I just escap'd
That very fate a score of times or more,
Bluft, bruis'd, and battling for him on the green.

IV.

Our love kept warm until our school-days' sun
Had set; and afterwards its smouldering fires
Were fed by letters, and rekindl'd oft
By friction of a frequent intercourse
Through visits in vacations; then, for years,
Behind it there was left a lingering light
Pervading moods of memory like the rays
Pour'd through a prism, wherein the commonest hues
Spray to uncommon colors when they break.
In truth, I never see to-day a face
Where flash the kindling feelings of a boy,

But back of it, I seem to feel the warmth
Of Elbert's heart. No school-boy past me bounds
But his dear presence seems to leap the years,
And rush on recollection, with a force
That brings from depths of joy, still'd long ago,
A spray as fresh as dash'd from them when first
They stream'd in cataracts. With love like his
To flood its brim, my soul appear'd so full
That, overflowing at each human touch,
Its pleasures could not stagnate.
But, you know
How fly the clouds above us, and in drought
The old springs fail ; and long we liv'd apart.

V.

Then Elbert, when we met, talk'd much of this :
How, all its chairs made vacant one by one,
Th' applause rose thinner at his bachelor-club ;
How, brief as birds', are human mating-times ;
How men, mere songs forgot, withdraw to nests—
To homes—their worlds, where all the sky is fill'd
With woman's sunny smiles and shadowy locks.
How sweet were life whose sun and shade were
these !

"We, Norman," said he, "were contented once ;
To love each other only ; but men part ;

And I confess that, while this light of love
Plays lambent round so many glowing lips,
I feel as chill, and lone, and out of place,
As one last dew-drop, prison'd in a shade
Of universal noon."
"The sun," said I,
"Will free it, by and by. Our time will come."

"Must come," replied he, "or I go to it.
Henceforth, let beauty's beams but gleam for me,
I shall not shun them, as has been my wont,
But make my eyes a sun-glass for my heart,
And let them burn it."

"May they burn," I cried,
"Until love's fragrant opiate fume so strong
It make your brain beclouded as a Turk's.
But I, alas, though wild o'er many a maid,
Am never mad enough to marry her."

"You poets," laugh'd he, "soar above earth so
That common clouds like these can reach you not.
But why say 'clouds'? for clouds rise o'er a flame
That smoulders. Love that burns is always clear."

"But mine will not burn clearly, till it show
A woman," said I, "fitted for a mate,
Whose mind, like yours, can really match my own.

Till then must memory, jealous for her past,
Out-do love's hope that cannot promise more."

"But maidens," cried he, "are not loved like men.
Bind beauty to their souls, then weigh the twain.
If one weigh naught, he waives his judgment then.
We must be practical."

Thus Elbert spoke,
While I, for whom these light and vapory moods
Had gather'd o'er his soul in slightest clouds,
Not tokening the storm that yet should burst,
Smiled only, thinking how, where throbb'd his heart,
Some maid unnamed must surely stand and knock;
Though this I had forgotten, save for that
Which happen'd later. You shall hear of it.

VI.

It came in Dresden, something like a year
More late than when my plan for life was changed.
The change was sudden; but, you know, the blow
That swept from me my parents, fortune, all,
Could not but stun me, and I could not think.
Words seem'd a mockery; I could not write.

So came my change—no myth—I felt it all:—
One time, when, lonely, I had knelt to Christ,

I seemed to rise not lonely ; I was his,
He mine. I vow'd to live then but for Him,
To break away from every cord of Earth,
And make my life accordant with his own.
Not only would I think the truth, but yield
Each grain in all my being to the truth,
And sow in wildest wastes, where all should germ
In generations growing toward the good.

But yet, a novice still, though, like St. Paul,
To will was present with me ; to perform
I found not how ; but, on performance bent,
Within a chancel chanting with the choir,
I stood before an altar, half the day,
And half before my books, with cravings pale
For church and stole and sermons of my own.

VII.

Then was it Elbert's friendship further'd me.
For finding me, and staring at my face,
And books, and cassock—when the puzzle pass'd,—
He, humbling to my humor, praised the priest
And all the powers of priesthood, till delight
Relax'd the rigor of my rôle ; and then
He wedged the wisdom of his own desire
Within my dreams, and broke apart their spell,
And drew aside the curtains of their couch,
And spoke of dawn, and light for all the world.

"First learn about this world," he urged, "and then
Learn how to help it. Minds like mine," he said,
"Should teach, revise, reform, and start the thought
To counteract ill aim'd philosophy.
Here loom'd an end worth reaching! which to reach
'T were well to cross the sea.—His purse was mine.
And go you as a student," Elbert said,
"Nor clad so like a priest, for whom all earth
Will don some Sabbath-day demean; go free
To find the man, hard by his work, at home."

Thus pleading many days, at last he won;
And, yielding to his wish, the sea I cross'd.

VIII.

Soon, borne to Dresden for a leisure week,
With whom, one morning, should I chance to meet
But Elbert's eldest sister?—now grown staid
And matronly withal, a second wife,
In charge of half a dozen sturdy boys;
Though these I saw not then; but all alone,
Much flush'd and flurried, sweeping up the street,
She stopp'd, and cried abruptly, "Why, my friend,
Are you here, Norman?—you?—where from?—how long?

Not heard of you for years ! That Elbert, drone,
Will never write the news. So glad I am
To see a man on hand when needed once !
Two girls, young friends of mine, just come to
town,
Have lost their trunks,—and I my husband too,—
And there they stand amid such throngs of men !—
And did you note the statues in Berlin,
In all the streets ?—of warriors, every one !
And these two girls, here travelling, by themselves,
Where might makes right, and woman slighted is,
Not strange it is their feelings toward you men,
In heat of indignation seething up,
Should brew at times some barm of bitterness ! "

IX.

Thus, rattling on, she led me, as confused
As feels a warrior at the morning drum,
Till came a sight supreme, arousing me :—
Two bright eyes only, sparkling in the light,
Where flush'd a face that flared, then hid itself
Behind a travelling hood, befleck'd with dust,
And fring'd with venturous locks of careless hair.

" I have them now ! " it cried ; and straight began
A tale, strain'd sweetly through those lips aglow
As sunset music. Then, when all was told,

The name I heard was "Edith."
Bowing low,
"Well done!" essay'd I; then,—to bandy back
That charge against the men I just had heard
From Elbert's sister,—"Well done as a man!"

X.

"That speech," laugh'd Elbert's sister, "scarce deserves
Our 'Well done as a woman!'—Edith, hark,
His praise for you is, 'Well done as a man!'"

Then Edith, echoing after, naïvely dropt,
"I tell you—nay—I will not say it though."

"Please do?" I ventur'd.
"Nay; it may offend,"
Replied she; while her slender shoulders shrugg'd
As if to tempt me like two dainty doors,
Doors all but swung ajar before a heart
That love seem'd dared to enter!
"Nay," I said,
"I vow you such a deal of patience now!"

"I do not know," she answer'd; "am not sure.
Your manly patience might break loose to sigh

More hints about my manhood! Just to think
That half of all mankind are merely girls
Compell'd to borrow all their tact from men!"

"Not so," I said; "not so; but commonly."—

"Ah, commonly! and what is this," she ask'd,
"That men-minds do so well?—discriminate?
Yet even I, dull woman, I can see
Brains differ in their grain. But men, forsooth,
Feel so much matter lodged in their brains—eh?—
That they weigh mind like matter in the lump,
And judge of character, as if 't were clay:—
This forms a man—has wisdom, firmness, power;
And that, a maid—is foolish, fickle, frail,
And never can be wholly safe, forsooth,
Except when subject to a man, her lord!"

"Ah, but," I said, "we men all prize you so!
To hold you ours, our pride seems infinite.
Thus lifted up by you, it is your fault
If we seem lords to you."
"Is it?" she ask'd,
"Or have you seem'd our lords so long, you think
Your lording over us has trained in us
What still needs lording over? Fashion yields
A man, at times, exemption from her forms,
But woman never. Wherefore, pray, is this?

Do not they both have souls ? and both aspire ?
Must one class only slave it to her sex ?—
A woman's soul, I think, as well as man's,
May show some mastery over its abode."

"But yet," I said, "You know, her frame divine—
And soul, too—men confuse things—who can tell
Which is the soul ?"

She answer'd absently :
"In truth they do confuse things ! only wise,
As owls that blink at light, too blind to see
What day dawns with a wife's enfranchisement ;
Ambitious, but forgetting that the meek
Inherit heaven, or that the oppressor dwarfs
His own surroundings ; that one's pride must stoop,
Or else his soul ; that earthly lords must bend,
And lift their consorts to their own prized seats,
As equals, queens ; or else must house with slaves,
And make the slavish habits there their own."

## XI.

"Well said !" I thought. "Disown it, though she may,
This maiden's mood is manlier than she deems" ;
And, as with manhood, so my wits went forth
To find a way to test her further still.

And just then Elbert's sister, hurrying back
With Alice, Edith's sister, whom she fetch'd,
Cried, half-way introducing us, "My fan!"

I stoop'd, and pick'd it up. Then, bowing low,
"Your humble slave," I said. "You know, some
claim
That genuine friends of either sex are slaves;
And only want of love would snatch a whip,
And snapping it, cry out: 'This way—serve me.'"

"And I, like them," said Edith, slightly flush'd,
"Seem wholly loveless. You may mourn it less
That yonder carriage waits me. For to-day,
All thanks for coming! We may meet once more."

XII.

I could have almost bared my soul to show
I meant no rudeness. Elbert's sister laugh'd,
And, walking homeward then, kept bantering me,
To storm my heart with courage womanly,
So sure that love of sex sways all us men.
"So fortunate!" she cried; "Heaven favor'd me.
They had no escort,—I no rival near;
And I must ply my arts this very eve."

"Ah, but my plans!" I said;—"I leave to-day
For studies at Berlin."

"Yes, yes; your plans!—
You serve ideals, like all idiots.
But you are more, much more, than out your teens;
And—well, you are no hermit, any way."

"Then must I find"—I laugh'd, yet half in earnest—
"The charms to tempt me!" and my reckoning
Fill'd all my fingers doubly with the traits
Of perfect womanhood.
"She owns," she said,
"All these, and more. For once, my poet, dream;
And full Elysium waits you when you wake.
But mind you, Norman, maids of Edith's kind,
In whose one person love so womanly
With intellect so manly has been join'd,
Need not to marry for a hand or head.
There, hearts alone can win. Bear this in mind;
And fan your fancy till your words grow warm,
Ay, glow to flash the white heat of the soul!"
Then, crying from her door, "Farewell till eve,"
True to her sex, unanswer'd yet assured,
The woman left.

## XIII.

And so my will was caught,
In toils so deftly drawn I flounder'd first,
Then, resting, smiled. We fight the hydra, we,

Who war against our nature. Every head
That reason clove would rise redoubled there.
Forsooth, my rudeness ought to be explain'd ;
For which a single visit would suffice ;
And this, for scarce a day, need check my work ;
Or, if I linger'd longer, all my life
Lay still before me. Wherefore haste away?
Fate might be beckoning!—"Nay, I should not leave,"
Sigh'd hope, at last, too warm by more than half ;
Then roused sweet echoes of faint hints, recall'd
From churchly sources, of one's need to wed,
If he would work the best, for all, with all.
Thus, like two cowards, clinging each to each,
Weak wish nudged wisdom, and weak wisdom wish.
Who gets on better?

XIV.

So that night we went.
And, all the way, my gay guide rail'd at me.
"Aha, my bachelor, your roving love,
Aha, has had its day! Yon sunset hues
But deck the curtains hung before its night."

"Alas," I cried, "if I must through them pass,
Woe me who wish it! See, this side of them,
The river in the horizon underneath—"

"Your Jordan, ere your promis'd land!" she said;
"You need baptizing for your harden'd heart."

"Ah me!" I sigh'd, yet strangely; for there seem'd,
While all the way the twilight thicker sank,
Sweet silence settling down o'er rival birds
Until the reverent air lay hush'd to heed
The hallowing influence of holier stars.
And, all the way, deep folding round my soul,
With every nerve vibrating at its touch,
Fell dim delight, through which, as through a veil,
Some nearer presence breath'd of holier life.
Ah, wandering Heart, and had I had my day?—
With closing gates as golden as yon west?
And whither was I moving in the dark?—
"Who knows?" my spirit ask'd, "who knows or cares?
On through the twilight threshold, trustingly!
What hast thou, Night, that weary souls should fear?
Thou home of love entranced, thou haunt of dreams,
Thy halls alone can hoard the truth of heaven!
Thy dome alone can rise to reach the stars!"

## XV.

She roused me, crying out, "Look toward the porch!"
I look'd, and there beheld our waiting friends,

And, grouped with them, some ruddy German maids
Whose deeper hues but finely served to shade
The subtler beauty of our special hosts.
These came from out that western world wherein,
By fresher breezes and by brighter suns,
The Saxon substance, sweeten'd and refined,
Unfolds, each season, more ethereally.

The two then moving from their sister maids,
Like petals loos'd from roses when in bloom,
Came forth to welcome us ; and, greetings o'er,
Of Europe, Edith spoke, and Germany,
And books, and music—how the church of Greece
Had carved earth's pivot that earth whirls upon
Within the centre of a flag-stone round
That paves a chapel in Jerusalem.
But she, who track'd that viewless whirl by sound,
And deem'd all harmony to centre here,
A Grecian only in her love of art,
Had found that pivot fix'd in Germany.

## XVI.

"A Grecian, truly !" Elbert's sister cried ;
"Each morning brings her fresh from shrines of art,
All flush'd, a priestess from an oracle,
To sanctify us grosser mortals here

With hints so vague ! such mutter'd mysteries !
Ah me, to hear her rave once ! "
Edith smiled,
"And eyes that see are blest too ! Which sees most—
My worship, or your wonder ? Know you, friend,"
She paused and added then, — "this critic's ground :—
The Sistine Babe it was, we spoke of Him.
Because I find art's glass, when rightly held,
Revealing through the real the truth ideal,
I said : 'I seem'd to see not only Him,
The Babe, but back of Him, His heavenly home.
I seem'd to enter this—His handmaid there,
And there commune until my soul was blest.'
I said : 'From thence my spirit seem'd to come,
And feel its arms the throne and couch of Christ.
And this,' I said, 'was wrought for me by art.
Some hold that souls transmigrate after death,
But art,' I said, 'made mine transmigrate here.'
For this you hear of raving. Do I err ?
The soul of feeling is in thought, not so ?
Then one, to feel refresh'd, must think she bathes
In rills that reach her from the freshest springs."

XVII.

"You know," said Elbert's sister, soothingly,
"Our soaring lark here bathes in every pool.

So be not frighten'd off ; her plumes but shake
A sprinkling from the bath they had to-day."

" Some please the world," said Edith ; " I, myself,—
My soul, I mean ; nor long to clip that soul
To suit mere wordling's notions. Courting crowds,
A soul lives crampt ; but if one speak the truth,
Crowds leave—good riddance !—space is clear'd
for friends."

" Clear'd verily ! " her sister cried, " Long live
These household pet gods of our modern homes,
Like sprites to fright the stranger off ! Now own
The fear you felt. It would appease her so ! "

XVIII.

To this rose no reply to Edith's lips.
I mark'd, instead, the gentlest trembling there,
Like ripples roused upon a tranquil sea
That rise from deep, unseen disturbances.
" They fail to read her rightly," thought I, then—
You know no man can flinch it : woman's grief,
If there be any manhood left in him,
Will rouse his efforts to bespeak her peace—
I found myself her soul's expositor
To clear the channel of its overflow.

" And when the thought is in one, when it springs,
Why, then, not let it spring ? The world is not

So fill'd with thought that it can spare our own.
And if we startle folks, jog off the guise
Of their deceit, we spy them as they are.
Between souls thus discover'd, Edith deems
That love must flow ; while friendship caught by craft
Is lost by confidence. I think her right.
Why not ? We all when in our noblest moods
Crave homage for our souls' nobility.
But who know what our souls are in themselves,
Save as our rôles report us outwardly ?
Did not divine hands form us as we are ?
Who love us as we are, love higher things
Than those who love what earth would make of us."

"My champion ! " Edith cried ; and waved her thanks,
With white sleeves fluttering from her shapely sides—
Ah me, a wing'd one sent to save my soul
Had scarcely stirr'd in me a greater joy.

## XIX.

My mien must have reveal'd it. Like a lake,
Whose fogs unfold to greet a genial sun,
Her moods unfolded to my sympathy ;

And, brightly imaged in her nature's depths,
I seem'd to face, at every turn, my own.

So new to me such views were, that I felt
As thrill'd as feels the savage maid, when first
She finds her own face in a stranger's glass,
Then spell-bound lingers, learning of herself.
So wrapt, my wonder hung, all wistfully,
About that spirit bright. What meant it all?
I could not then believe,—I scout it yet,—
That mortals can afford to slight the souls
Reflecting theirs, who make them mind themselves
And prize the good they own, and dread the ill.

You smile, friend: yes; and often so would I.
My head would oft, made jealous of my heart,
Deny that reason ruled my impulses.
And oft my heart, to bear such weight of joy,
Would faint from too much feeling. I would ask
Could I be sane yet find my life so sweet?—
At least I would be sure; so like a friend
Who finds a long-lost friend amid a crowd,
And stares, and holds him at arm's length, a time,
Ere clasping him with courage to his breast
That wellnigh bursts the while, I held her off,
This long-sought soul that mine had found a friend;
And did not dare to trust her as I would.

XX.

What struggles then were mine ! Too cautious
grown,
To dare to risk a fall, though but in love,
How would I brace my powers against her charms
That might unbalance me ! How would my will,
Intent to master my reluctant mien,
Make stiff my every smile ! or, were my heart
Too strong to be suppress'd, how would I thwart
And turn each glance that could reveal one glimpse
Of how I loved her, toward her sister first !
Unconscious Edith,—could she read deceit ?—
'T was all I dared to use. How could I else,
Poor fool, that then I felt myself to be,
Hide my infatuation !

XXI.

What of her ?—
How could she know me when I mask'd myself ?
Was not her sister pleased, when pleasing me ?
Did Edith not please me, when pleasing her ?
And so for Alice only seem'd her care ;
And Alice was a fair and flippant naught,
An empty echo only of my love.
The sweetness of the family all was spent
To fill the elder Edith.
Then alas,
Too late, I learn'd my error. How I chafed,

Kept back from midnight strolls for Alice's sake !
And jogg'd from tête-à-têtes to give her place !
Then with her left, inspired alone to wish
To be like her a dunce ; and thus to be
Like her, in some way, Edith's all-in-all.

XXII.

Nor could I hint this fact to Edith ; nay.
Unselfish, all ethereal in her thought,
A disembodied soul had held less moods
Touch'd through the senses. One, as soon, had snared
With tatter'd nets of tow a wind of spring,
Or with his own breath warm'd the wintry air.
Her love's regard in no way could be reach'd.
At times, I would essay philosophy,
Or try to freight her fancy's wings with facts.
Like merest sand, flung off a nervous bird,
My pleas were shaken back.
She " There," would cry ;
" Some everlasting everybody's law
Applied again to me ! Nay, nay, this world
Would grind one's very soul to common dust ! "

XXIII.

" And what else are we ? " once I turn'd to ask ;
" Would God we all could free ourselves from laws ;

But half our lives we spend in learning them ;
And half in learning how to love them then.
And but in souls that learn life's laws by heart,
Has wisdom, so it seems, a sway complete."

"'T is so with earthly wisdom," she rejoin'd ;
"But earth is sway'd by folly,—idiot child
Of freedom fetter'd. You may live its slave ;
But I choose freedom ! "

And, as then she left,
"You lawless," sigh'd I, "will you always prove
The water Undine of my wilderness,
All maddening, with strange metamorphoses,
My faint love thirsting to refresh itself ? "—

## XXIV.

Oft while I mooted this, she changed, and seem'd
A fount of laughter now that sprang within,
O'er-rill'd her lips and rippled round her guise,
The very train's hem shaking by the flow.
"Nay, nay, but I shall trust you yet," I thought ;
"And still believe you good, and hold it true
That maids, like minnows, seldom show themselves
Till, caught and drawn from out the open sea,
They frisk in safety in some household pond ! "

Like this, my moods moved on,—life's usual way,
The mainspring sped by balanced contraries,
And every pulse, whose beating proves we live,
With deathlike stillness swift alternating.
One hour, my faith in her was like the sun,
The next, my doubt was lightless as the night.
All prefaced fitly that which you shall hear.

XXV.

I, once, recurring to my youth, had said
Of Elbert, that he soon, fulfilling plans
Long form'd, would join me here in Germany.

"Why," Alice cried, "to think you know so well
Our Elbert!"
"Yours?" I ask'd.
"Ours," Edith said,
"Ay, ay; our families have been friends for years."
But spite her careless tone, her eyes appear'd,
Slipping through lashes long, to shun my own.

And why was this?—And why, too, had she
flush'd?—
What subtle weapon had been used to cut
Beneath the surface of her mien, and bring
The heart-blood from its core?
Then I recall'd
That Elbert's moods, of late, had seem'd to move

In strange far mists of fancy.—Could it be
That Edith, she was his ?—And he, my friend,
Was he the one then that had caged her love,
And placed it where my soul in reaching forth
Could sense but bars of chill indifference ?—
I could not ask her nor her sister this ;
Nor Elbert's sister now, for in the week
When first I met her, she had sail'd for home.
But soon, like worms that would not wait for death,
Fear-fretted jealousies clung round the form
Of dying hope that now prized Edith more,
To feel that Elbert too had prized her so.

## XXVI.

A few days later, as we sat and talk'd,
He on us burst, and brought a sudden light
Illuminating her, and paling me,
Blanch'd, ash-like, in the flame of that hot flush
That warm'd her welcome. All my heart and breath
In silence seem'd to sink, like buzzing bees
When autumn steals the sunlight from the flowers,
And frost seals down their sweets. I heard them talk
Like one who just has walk'd a glacier path
With boist'rous friends ; then, stumbling, slips away,

Far suck'd through freezing fathoms down to hell,
Yet hears the cruel laughter crackling still.

XXVII.

This scarce prepared my mind for Elbert's glee,
When then we left the sisters. "Ah, good friend,
So glad to see you! Such a desert, life!
And friendship, such an oasis!—Your health!
We 'll clear our dusty throats, and then, my boy,
With deeper draughts we 'll clear our dusty souls."

Thus sped he, hurrying on from thought to thought,
Yet not one breath for Edith could he spare.—
Why not? Could he not trust my friendship yet?
Half anxious then, half curious to detect,
Though wary still of love so subtly hid,
My lips, bold-braced yet trembling at the deed,
Essay'd a note to touch him,—Edith's praise.

XXVIII.

"She looks well," said he, somewhat absently.
"She looks well!" cried I, half-way nettled now;
Forsooth, should Edith be abused to show
What brutes men are who lose their trust! "She looks—
For what then do you take her? for a frame,
An empty effigy of human shape,

Like what a shopman hangs his gowns upon ?—
Her soul is what I spoke of,—of her soul."

" Her soul ? " he said ; " may be ; but I, may be,
Have never seen it."
" How ?—this too ! " I thought,
" A slight is it ?—or triumph that he vaunts ? "

He caught my feeling from my fever'd mien,
And words confused and few ; and, warming then,
Made answer : " Norman, if I loved you less,
I more might love, and more might spare myself.
The thing my sister wrote, I deemed her whim ;
Could not conceive it true, yet can it be ?—
I swear, it staggers half one's faith to find
A man, devoted to the aims you claim,
So little circumspect."
What meant he now ?
Could he believe that I had form'd a plan
To woo his Edith, knowing she was his ?—
And could my sleepless nights, my troubled heart,
My prayerful deeds, my nature that he knew,
Be so misjudged, without some fault in him ?—
" So little circumspect in what ? " I ask'd.

And then with words that could but anger me,
" In what but choice of company ? " he said ;

"No more you think of study, duty, church,
But waste the whole day long with one like this!—
Nay, check me not. I understand my words.—
This actress, though right artless in her way,
This actress here, would play"—
"With me!" I cried;
"This 'actress!'" and I know not what I said;
But yet recall what kept him forcing in,
"You err!"—"You do me wrong!"—"You know her not!"—
Wild words, the which he ended, saying then:
"Not such am I as you profess to be;
But had you common-sense, no piety,
You might perceive a farce, if not a fault:
A broad church yours will be then, when your mate,
Attracting towards the stage by charms you lack,
Will draw the sinners, while you draw the saints."

## XXIX.

Struck blind, I scarcely could have felt more stunn'd.
Was this the truth? An actress was she then?
Why had not Elbert's sister told me this?—

"Not told you this?" cried Elbert; "What? not told?
Ay, ay, I see.—She hoped that love, perchance—

It is a woman's balm for every ill—
Might woo this Edith from her present life.
She knows her not.—And you—have you told
her?—
Does Edith know your plans?"
"She must have known"—
I answer'd back; and then I check'd myself.
Had not she blush'd to hear that Elbert came?—
For fear was it, lest he should tell the truth?—
To me, her friend? to me, deceived, her dupe?
To me, whose love she might have known, yet knew
That all she seem'd to me was not her all?—
If she had meant deception, could my love
Survive the test?
Those watching death-beds, mark
That souls, just dying, ere above they spring,
Breathe deep, then pass away. And so with minds,
When come the deadliest woes. Down deep in
thought,
I scarce had deem'd that aught from hell could roil
Such dregs of bitterness long undisturb'd.

## XXX.

The fault, sigh'd conscience, had been all my own:
How safely might one sail this sea of life
If all his reckonings were but true to heaven!
Ah, siren-like, a rivalling earthly love

May lure to realms whose mountain heights are clouds,
Clouds warmly hued above a cold gray shoal,
Whose only outlines are the breakers' caps,
Whose only stir, the fury of the storm.

And I, who now had learn'd the truth, what now ?—
Should I turn back to aims I knew were safe ?—
I vow'd to do it ; yet I thought—and thrill'd—
Could I but hold her soul, but own herself,
Though all things else were lost, this gain were sweet !—
Were sweet, though all were lost ? Why need this be ?
All might be saved. Did I believe in God ?—
That he could change a life through human means ?
Might not her life be chang'd then ?—What were I
But faithless wholly, did I try this not ?

## XXXI.

So, soon, to draw her thoughts out, baiting mine,
Some slur I dropt, suggested by a church :
It touch'd a theatre. "Extremes," I said,
"Have met."
"Extremes," said she, "have met before !
I take your meaning. Elbert has disclosed—
Not what I am, but what I seem to be

To those who will not view me as I am.
You join their lists ?—I hoped for better things."

" But was it right to keep me ignorant ? "

" I hoped it right," she said, " to keep you wise.
What Elbert thought, I knew. With you, had hopes,
That she who might not seem so wholly wrong
Might better represent a class unknown,—"

" Without design, might represent amiss,"
I answer'd. " As for you, however class'd,
I fear no class could claim you, all in all.
For all rules have exceptions."
" Take but rules
For this time," said she. " Did you ever find
That ever, when the seers look forth through heaven,
They view there pews and pulpits ?—Nay, not so :
Yet oft they note a stage and galleries,
All throng'd with white-robed hosts attendant there.
So these, you see, at times may hint of good."

" They may," I said, " but do they, as a rule ? "

" Ah, as a rule," she said, " they hint of life— "

" But mainly life to laugh at or to fear,"
I answer'd.

"When emotion swells and shrinks,
The spirit's wings are moving," she replied.
"And that art moves them most, which mirrors most
The life that is, and therefore is the truth.
So often have I heard my father say:
'We read of truth who spell from nature's page;
And art can best translate the meanings there;
For 't is the artist's thought that finds each form
A form of thought,—imagination's glass
That views the infinite in the finite fact.
Here moves a man, you say. What see you?—man?—
Nay, nay; that guise material fashions there
The image only of his manliness.
And you can only know his life within,
As from the image you imagine it.
Yon little girl that skips beside the porch,—
I know her, love her, not, save as I pass
Behind that face to reach a region rare
Where dolls seem sentient babes, and brothers kings.
And yonder maidens, musing in delight,
I know not, love not, till, in sacrifice,
My spirit seems to yield to their desires,
To wait a watchful servant unto them,
To move with motives that inspire their deeds,
To look through their own eyes and see their views,

And thrill with rhythm when their ear-drums throb ;
Then, joining all with all, imagine thus
The movements of their hidden inner moods.
So too, through all of life, how know we more ?—
All things are fitful images alone,
Reflecting glory from the Absolute ;
And he who can imagine from the part
What marks the whole, walks in the light of heaven.
Find then a life where every child becomes
Earth's animated toy of manliness,
Each man the mass from which to mould a god,
And earth the pit whence all heaven's wealth is mined,
You find for thought a life worth living for,
A life the artist gives it : it is he
Discerns a spirit always veil'd in shape,
A soul in man, and reason everywhere.' "

## XXXII.

Ah, Edith, so I mused, an artist thou,
Thou art indeed ! but not an actress, no,
Whatever may have train'd thee, save to tread
The stage of truth ! and Elbert's every act
Against my flinty confidence struck fire,
And flash'd, each time I met him now, anew ;
The more so, that each time I met him now,
In earnest, or to stir me to distrust,
He flutter'd like her fan at Edith's side,

Her silence sooth'd with subtlest flattery,
Her vacant hours invaded with himself;
Till all my life, at last, appear'd a plot
To steal upon his absence, and then pluck
Love's fruit which once his presence only brought.

XXXIII.

And so, henceforth, I less could welcome him.
How could I do it,—with his views of her,
Yet wooing her?—He wellnigh made me doubt
If I might not mistake her,—doubt I check'd,
Flush'd fiercely soon that Elbert's deeds could hint
Thoughts so unworthy. When I spoke to him,
He laugh'd me off.
"Why, man, I like your friend,
And she likes me; and with the other sex
The more we like, sometimes, the less we love—
Or think we love. Do I deceive her, then,
In showing friendliness?—Why think you so?—
Forsooth, if beauty pleases me, I smile;
If gratefulness beguile me, gaze at it;
If wisdom awe me, offer my respect.
Good art I laud; with fancy, am a poet;
And with emotion, an enthusiast.
What then?—Am I a hypocrite?—How so?—
Must all one's sympathy be personal?
Must one appropriate all that he would praise?
Is beauty such a flower, or is a man

So much a beast, that, having taste for it,
He needs must go and gorge it down ?—Go to !—
I watch the fair thing ; of its fragrance sniff ;
Then leave for others. Edith knows this well ;
For that, trust her."

XXXIV.

But was it, as he claim'd ?
Were both of them so wise ?—Or would he now
By sheer sharp practice cut us two apart ?
This seem'd most like him, and most anger'd me.
Was I a boy that he should foil me thus ?

Yet what to do ?—The more I question'd this,
The more I saw but only one true course.
Our aims—my own and Edith's—differ'd much.
Yet knew I more than this. Our hearts were one
In all desires that had inspired these aims.
And if our lives and hearts could be but join'd,
Could not my love and hers, together put,
Outweigh such aims as would be hers alone ?
Why not have faith in love, mine join'd to hers ?
What power was stronger in the universe ?
Why not have faith to trust this only soul
That ever I had met, to whom my moods
Could be unroll'd, assured of insight there
To read them rightly ? Why, it seem'd decreed :
Her power to read my soul gave her the right

To know its love, whatever might be hers.
And were I but to speak the truth to her,
So tell her all, why fear this simple truth ?
For I would say I loved her, not her aims.
If then she should prefer her aims to me,
It would be proof that she could love me not.
But if she should prefer me to her aims,
Then surely she could yield her wish to mine.

## XXXV.

So, near the sunset of a summer's day,
While walking by the lake within the park,
"I mean," I breathed out cautiously, "to write
A tale of love ; and I have plann'd the tale
To open here. In after time, perchance,
Those souls to whom it proves of interest
May love to linger here, recalling it.
Look now—this lake. To gain the full effect
Of palace, park, and yonder heaven unveil'd,
One, gazing downward in the water's depth
Should note them wash'd of gross reality,
And—as in art—reflected. With this view
This tale of mine shall open. First of all,
Here, in the sunshine nearest to our feet—
Ay, in the water ; ay, friend, here I mean—
Just underneath us,—mark you, mark you, there,
The hero, and, beside him, his ideal ! "

## XXXVI.

And when she saw us two there, "What?" she cried ;
And then stood speechless ; whereat I sped on,
Detailing all my plans and all my hopes :
How she, with soul so true and aims so high,
Might meet in them the mission meant for her,—
How all the wrongs of earth might be redeem'd
Through sacrificial deeds of such as we.

Still stood she silent. Then I spoke again :
"But think not, Edith, for my plans alone
I plead with you. I plead, too, for myself ;
And tell my plans that you may know myself ;
Not holding that I stand above you, friend.
Nay, nay ; I oft feel worthy scarce to touch
Your fingers' tips, or stand erect and taint
The level of the air you breathe in ; nay,
I would not judge your life ; would only crave,
When we have so much else in sympathy,
That holy state where two souls, else at one,
Would both be God's.—Ah, could you thus be mine?"

## XXXVII.

Her silence then was broken. "Well might I
Be proud to be thus yours. Who could not find
All meet for manhood, in your manliness?
But no, for you forget our different aims.

You never told me of these plans before.
And, Norman, now—no, no ; for, through your
church,
That fann'd some whim of his, left smouldering,
Some spark of doubt to ardent heresy,
My father suffer'd, lost his honor'd name,
His living, all ; nor struggled, scrimpt, and starved
To leave his daughter ignorant of the cause.
And I ?—no, no ; it courses through my blood ;
And you would hate my tastes, which cannot be
Like yours religious ; no, for I was made
To be the minister of only art."

" But, Edith," urged I, " truth far more includes
Than most men deem who would deem all things
theirs.—
Your tastes are not religious ?—Mine are not,
If by religion you mean piety,—
Religion's brew, froth'd bubbling to be seen.
But how is it beneath the surface, friend ?
Down deep within ?—is not the substance there ?
I never seem'd religious half so much
As when at one with you."
She but replied
To tell me how " her father's legacy
Had been her sister, whom she must not leave.
For her sake, seeking means of livelihood,
She first rejected, then accepted what

Her spirit, spurning once, had learn'd to love ;
As had her sister ; and for both of them
Each hope, and joy, and all they thought of now,
Was bounded by the music of the stage.
Nor could my logic change this ; nay," she said,
"Not logic leads the artist on, but light."

## XXXVIII.

I heard in vain—I could not give her up.
I urged her still, still hoping her to swerve.
My slight of music, rousing her defence,
But proved my love too weak to rival it.

"My father oft," she said, "would quote your Book ;
Say 'music marshall'd all the better life.
What else could sway the soul, yet leave love free
To think and choose and do?'—What different moods,"
She added, while before us play'd the band,
"These strains, we hear, arouse in different minds !
That maid may smile amid sweet dreams of love ;
Her dark attendant dream of but her wealth.
That matron plan some fresh self-sacrifice ;
And that spare fellow, twirling near her side
The soft mustache that downs his shrinking lip,
Plan only how to hide its stingy look.

And thus all listen, musing different things;
And all, with conscious freedom, muse of them;
And yet one harmony controls them all,
Aroused or calm'd to match its changing flow.
What else but music frees the mind it rules?
'Good-will to man,' was spoken first in song."

"Good-will," I said, "but follows will for good."

"And will for good will come," she answer'd back.
"As in the older advent, so to-day,
Would I believe in power behind sweet song
To hold the universe in harmony,
Expelling evil and impelling good
Through all the limits of created life,—
A spirit's power!—What though we mortals here
With eyes material cannot see the hosts
That issue forth in forms that while they move
Awake around us echoes everywhere!
We start to spy them, but we only hear
Their rustle in the trees by which they pass;
Or where, with dash of water o'er the rocks,
They leave the sea or linger in the rill.
At times they rest a moment on the earth,
When twilight hides them, sighing gently then,
And lull to dreams, with tones in sympathy,
The lowly insect and the lowing herd.
At times, amid the winds that rise at morn,

They sweep across the land and startle sleep
From nervous birds that twitter in their track ;
And, now and then, in clouds that close the sky,
They bound adown the rift the lightning cleaves
Till sunlight overhead pours through again.
A spirit's power has music ; and must rule
Unrivall'd still as far as sense can heed,
Or reason hark behind it. All the chords
Of all things true are tuned by hands divine,
And thrill to feel the touch !—
But sounds may rise
In souls untuned, like harp-strings when they snap,
Or, though as soft as dreamland breezes are,
May fright like forests when the dark leaves blow
About the solitary murderer.—
And sweetest sounds to sweetest souls may bring
But foretastes vague of harmonies on high.
The school-girl hears her comrade's ringing laugh,—
'T is but the gamut, run ere flows the tune.
The maiden heeds her lover's mellow plea,—
'T is but the key-note struck before the chord.
The dame is moved by tones that cheer her home,—
And they perchance prelude the theme of heaven.
For even blows of toil and battle-guns
May be the drum-rolls of the martial strains
That rise to greet the glories sure to come.
Ay, wait we long enough, we all may hear

In all things music ; far above, at last,
May hear the treble thrilling down from heaven,
And e'en from hell no discord in the jar
That only thunders back a trembling bass."

So Edith spoke ; while I, left lonely all,
Beheld her, ardent for her art, a cloud,
Aglow by dawn, then drawn away, away.

## XXXIX.

I said, I know not what ; but far too proud,
Intoxicated though I was by love,
To let her view the folly of my fall,
I said not all I felt ; but what I felt,
Beneath the first fierce humbling of the storm,
Floods o'er my memory yet with half the woe
That overwhelm'd me then. Am I, I thought,
So strong in love, and waiting long for it,
And always true to it, to be outweigh'd
By merest chaff of manhood, on the stage
Or in the pit ? I swore 't was ever so
With all her sex. Worth never weigh'd a straw.
A very satyr could outwoo a sage.—
Weak woman !—yet she must be weak—in brain
Or body. Better to be weak in brain !
She then, perchance, might serve a husband's thought,
And wisdom's voice might rule the family !

But were her mind too strong to serve his thought,
She might serve that in him which could not think.—
A man, to wed she-brains, should seek to be
Commended as a fool!

XL.

And then I stopp'd:—
Here raved I, jealous of this fool alone,
This coming clown.—I blush'd to think of him.—
But what of her?—of Edith?—She would live,
Her figure robed to fascinate—ah—crowds!
The rabble would be ravish'd just, forsooth,
To clap with crazy hands the rarer air
In which she moved. For them, her voice would sound,
With slightest trills so swaying all their kind
That thronging cheers would thunder in response!—
Her face, so sweet, would plead till foulest souls
Would feel how pure were joys beyond their reach,
And long for things their touch could never taint!
My sweet, sweet love!—
But ah, at Edith's side,
Should I be aught?—Alas, I could but seem—
Beside the gilded glory of the stage,
Beside the loud-mouthed suitors of the show,
An unwhipt cur, to wait at some backdoor,

And jar with signalling bark the echoes sweet
Of all-the-town's applause. She mine would be
But as the sun, whose flaming brow has touch'd
The morning sea that flushes far and near,
Is thine, O trembling globulet of spray,
Because, forsooth, his image, glass'd in all
The sea and world, is mirror'd, too, in thee !—
Fool, fool ! yet dear, dear folly !
These my thoughts ;
My words—all I recall now—came at last
When slowly sauntering back we reach'd her home.
" Would God," I sigh'd, " the time might come for us,
When, looking toward the future now so dark,
We two should need no more to say good-night."

" Good-bye," she said, and left me in the gloom.

## XLI.

Then was it, as I turn'd about, by chance,
I came on Elbert ; and my whole soul surged
To dash at him its briny bitterness.
Is he here, thought I,—he to whom, alas,
The very potion, poisoning all my hopes,
Will prove the sparkling nectar of success,
And bring good cheer, though bringing death to me ?—
Then let him share it !—Still, my wiser pride

The purpose check'd, and balancing rash hate
With hateful prudence, closed his opening smile
But with a frown that would not welcome him.

With any truth to self, so argued I,
I could do nothing else ; nor could abide
A town that held him. So I left the town ;
And so at once these friends, so prized of old,
And I had parted,—not as friends should part,
With all love's zenith fever'd like the skies
Where eve has rent from them a glorious sun,
Then cool'd and calm'd in starlight sprinkled thick
Until the sun comes back. We crack'd apart,
Like icebergs drifting southward, join'd no more,
And sunn'd alone the while they melt away.

XLII.

No need is there that here I should recall—
I would not if I could—my suffering.
From Elbert, best of friends, my nobler self,
My soul of virtue and my heart of love,
What cause could rightly tear me ?—Asking this,
My heart rose up from reason to rebel ;
Indignant to have found a theory
That dared to hold an innate impulse down ;
While will, caught there, betwixt the heart and head,
Each charge would bear, and yet forbear to act.

And Edith, peerless Edith ! how my soul
Would struggle to forget her ! Struggling thus,
How fair her form, conjured by raving thought,
Would rise, a Venus o'er my sea of sighs,
Till I would bend, and seem to plead anon
To be forgiven for forgetting her !
And then, how would I tear her traits apart ;
And pluck the petals from each budding grace
And hope its naked stem some trace would show,
Too void of beauty, to suggest again
The bloom and sweetness of the life I loved.
Alas, but while I wrought for this alone,
How would her virtues but the more unfold !—
Like God's own glory flowering in the skies,
That those detect who would not find it there,
But, when they test the stars, must deal with light.

## XLIII.

I wrought and rested ; it was all in vain.
My highest consolation was the hope
That hard-earn'd sleep might hold me long in dreams
Where evermore my soul might with her dwell,
Though every morn I seem'd yet more alone.
Awake, asleep, throned constant o'er my heart,
I served this image all intangible,
This photographic fantasy of truth,
This fairy nothingness of vanish'd fact,

A shape to love, minute yet mighty still,
To senses nothing, but to spirit all.

XLIV.

Thus lived I, triumph'd over ; as are clouds
Whereon the sun sits throned ; all bright are they,
And bright beneath them is the sunset sea.
In splendid serfdom to its love, my soul,
That shone with kindling glory, thence beheld
A kindling glory shine from all about.

No whim of mine was this ; it fills my creed ;
The graft of all true love regenerates.
Souls in whom love is born are born anew,
And all their family of fancies then
Bear family traits ; those loving, and those not,
Being wide apart as rainbows and the rain.
I might be superstitious, but to me
The temple of my life's experience
Had been less sacred, had it held no shrine
Whereon to place sweet tokens of my love.
And all that loom'd around seem'd holier now,
Illumed by holy lights of memory.

Nor long was it ere I had learn'd to share
In all the love of all with whom I met ;
And oft, too, thus invoking sympathy,
My wishes wrought like witches, and conjured
The thing they wish'd for : sympathy would come.

XLV.

And so my moods, thus moving on, at last
Found special pleasure in a friendship form'd
Upon a day of tramping through the Alps.
Her name was Grace, and gracious was her mien ;
And graces everywhere attended her
Through jars and joys of journeys afterward.
By far less splendid than my Edith was,
Less striking, less alluring, and less shunn'd ;
Her brilliance would not dim a rival's eyes,
Nor fairness shade another's face with frowns.
One saw in her a modest, model maid,
A woman loved by women ; and with men
A presence, mellow-lighting like the moon ;
Yet could she shed no light when came my storms,
As now they came full often. Then it seem'd
Her very mildness made her moods too dull
To penetrate the clouds that cover'd mine.

XLVI.

" It must be lonesome here for one like you,
A stranger-land, indeed, here," would she sigh.
" Why could we not, church people, day by day,
Have meetings here, and thus live more at one ? "

When hearts hold secrets, even love that comes,
And comes in crowds, will bring the prying soul

Intent to spring them open. How I shrank
To meet with those with whom my soul could find
No ground of sympathy beneath the tye
Produced when tongue and teeth and lips combine
To form one shibboleth ! A fate like this
Foretoken'd only, made me well nigh faint
As feels a soldier, falling at his post,
With heart shell'd out and emptied of his soul.
I could but find excuses, partly real
And partly feign'd, the fringe of ready whims.

## XLVII.

She startled echoes from my inmost soul
By words that named my "life-work."
"Yes," I said ;
"All Christ's should sympathize. All own one lord ;
All wait beside one shore ; all watch one tide.—
So too do snipes and snails ! so those whose souls
Shall rule ten towns in heaven, and only one.
Souls differ, Grace ; and John from James, as well
As both from Judas.—Judas lingers too."

"So many," sigh'd she, "sell their Christ, and think
Souls rich, that but receive suggestions rich
From art or——"
Had regard for Edith, now,
Made me, at last, a champion of art ?—

"However or wherever plied," I said,
"Real power for good owns good enough to claim
Some courtesy from Christian charity.
If I but fling this stone in yonder pond,
Wherever it may fall, it stirs the whole.
So if I throw out thought for mind or heart,
Through art or through religion, each may move
The whole man thus, and move him for his good."

"Ah, but," she breathed, with slight dogmatic stress,
"A simple woman, I would move his heart,
Through love, as Christ too did; not so?"
"Do this,"
I said, "you do but what is woman's right;
And none about you will dispute the right.
But ask me not to limit thus the Christ.
How dare I?—if our churches teach the truth,
If He incarnated the sum of life
And spirit of all good,—his holiness
His wholeness, and His perfectness, the proof
Of what He was? Nor dare I limit those
Who follow Him.—Why may they not live His,
Not aiming here nor there, but everywhere
To make the most of all God meant them for.
And things there are that art can do for man
To make him manlier. Not the senseless rock
Is all it fashions into forms of sense;

But senseless manhood, natures hard and harsh,
Great classes crush'd, and races forced to crawl
Till all their souls are stain'd with smut and soil—
These seem more human when the hands of art
Have grasp'd their better traits and hold them forth.
And men who see these better traits, and see
The tender touch of art that holds them forth,
Behold a beauty never else beheld ;
And all their hearts beat more humanely while
They heed the plea of these humanities.
And so, I think, although the wilderness,
At times, a John in camel's hair may need,
There open too, in ways of life less wild,
More ways, where love may plead in guise more soft.
In short, as long as one may choose his course,
'T is best to do what each can do the best."

## XLVIII.

" Oh, you perplexing ! " cried she ; " not for me,
For *your* brain ! Tell, pray, where it rummaged last,
To catch these cobwebs ?—I have seen them, yes ;
These halls are full of them, and libraries,
Old musty things !—But, Norman, soberly,
This German text is bad for eyesight, yes ;
And half I doubt—Come, tell me, tell the truth,
Do *you* see clearly aught that you can do ? "
" Why so ? " I ask'd ; " do you ? "
" Why not," she said,

All serious now, "do what shall yield life's day
The most of glory at its evening hour?—
And suns set brightest after days of storm."

"What, always?" ask'd I; "are you sure of this?
I know true faith that mainly aims to rid
Our present life from fears of future ill.
To it what need of storms, if sunshine here
May best prepare one for the future calm?
That future is eternal; even so
How can we gauge th' eternal save by time?
How can we judge of joy that will not end,
Save by our own, if ours would only last?
What is it to be blessèd, if not this,—
To find our process of becoming blest
Made permanent, our young weak wings of faith
Full fledged to fly by habit?—and if so,
Heaven's habits are form'd here. Suppose a youth,
That, by and by, he may enjoy much wealth,
Act miserly,—what gains he by and by?—
Much wealth, perhaps; but, holding with it, too,
The miser's moods, now made establish'd traits,
Incorporated modes of all his life,
He with them holds what most unfits his soul
To use wealth, or enjoy it. So on earth
When avarice, aim'd for heaven, makes man a monk,
What can he gain thereby, save monkish moods,
That will become establish'd traits,

Incorporated modes of all his life?
But, holding these, his soul must with them hold
What most unfits it to enjoy—not here,
In any sphere at all,—a life of love."

XLIX.

"You surely would not mean," she ask'd and paused,
"That you could throw aside your hopes? your vows?
Your life-work?—seek enjoyment?"
"Ah," said I,
"Enjoyment is the man's most genuine praise
To Him that fram'd his being. What should I,
A child of God, do here but live God's life?—
Which is not now, nor then, but evermore.
My soul must thrive the best, as best I make
My now, eternal; my eternal, now.
So when a storm comes, let me bar it out;
And, braced against the present ill, grow strong;
And when the sunshine, let me open wide
To that which makes all nature grow more sweet.
Thus, realizing in my earthly state
The aim of heaven, why do I praise Him less
Whose life is that of heaven, than those who wear
The guises of that slattern of the soul,
Asceticism, shuffling toward far bliss,
Slipshod and snivelling?"—

"Now, that goes too far!"
Cried Grace. "Do I do this?—Ah, but I know
A man so moody!—Own it. Were I you,
I just would set to work. To work off whims,
The best way, say they, is to work them out;
One hand at work is worth ten heads that shirk."

"You find me moody!" sigh'd I; "and complain.
Moods seem not meet. Oh, no; they prove we feel!—
Nor pious they: they prove we think!"

L.

And yet,
I could but blame myself; so fain to draw
This gentler soul from her still streams of life
Toward waves so fiercely dash'd about my own!
You know, though, how it is: our thought, like light,
Opposed, will vaunt itself; and brightest play,
Glanced off from things it does not penetrate.
So, more to shock her than for sympathy,
My thought play'd round the surface of her life:
It had been shaped to make so smooth a thing
I burn'd to warp it of complacency.
Oft, though unconscious of the least design,
I feign'd to fall in fancied depths of ill,
And mock'd that I might hear her call me thence;

And learn'd therein to envy some the rake.
For what a charm it were to hear—not so ?
That is, if one were vicious, through and through—
Such pleas for love from lips that aye were pure ?
The very depth of one's unworthiness
Would whet his zest so for a thing so strange !

LI.

But weeks and months pass'd by, in which she fill'd
A certain void in life ; and, every eve,
We parted for the night made better friends.
Once, ending thus the pleasures of the day,
We chanced upon a path where, sauntering too,
Lo, Elbert enter'd to encounter us.

At first scarce friendly, after divers tests,
And in the new light of my life with her,
His older love return'd with oldest warmth :
"To think so thin a fancy," he exclaim'd,
"As last I found you folded in, should screen
Our genuine hearts, a moment, each from each !"

LII.

The fancy thin !—I let him keep his word ;
I would not argue.—Still, with care aroused
To guard some credit yet for having sense,
I hinted at the truth,—how I had changed,
And how had changed my thoughts about myself,

About my life-work. "For that fancy, friend,
That fancy thin, a true phase show'd of me.
If 't were but spray, 't was on a constant sea
That heaves and heaves. With moods that move like mine,
So madden'd by traditions, calm'd by dreams,
Scarce happy ever, till at hazard dash'd
Through ways that lead to sheer uncertainty,
Where fancy more may seek than matter shows
In things that are but matter,—what am I
For life-work such as priesthood, sure in creeds
And sureties for the soul, whereon may lean
All weaker faith, with warrant not to bend?"

LIII.

Then Elbert laugh'd. "Ah, were you but a bow,
Your bending most would shoot most.—Not a priest?
A man alone?—You yet a brother are
To many a soul that sails this sea of life,
Where oft the horizon trembles with the change
Of wind and wave; and hope, too hale, oft mourns
Fair promises, like skies that fade in fog.
A man alone?—And yet, the moods of man
May make men love us for our manliness,
Who draw them, Christ-like through our sympathy,
Toward self,—God's image here, and thus toward Him."

"But draw them how?" I cried. "Woe me, I stand,
A poet born, who deem'd his Muse had fled;
That time and trouble had a stone roll'd up,
Her sweet form sealing in its sepulchre.
And yet one breath of love could rouse the dead.
All day the subtle spirit haunts me now,
A medium thrill'd to sound her sweetness forth."

"Then let it sound!" he said. "Rare rest it were,
Were all one's recreation freshen'd thus;
One's slumber serenaded by the Muse."

"One's recreation! slumber!" I exclaim'd;
"Is mind a deep that wells with most of thought
When most 't is void? I tell you none can draw
A truthful inspiration save from truth.
The poet's ken may people heaven like clouds,
All phantom shaped, and splendid as their sun;
But all his fairest forms were vapors first
That heaven drew, mist-like, from the earth beneath.
Thought decks itself in holiday attire,—
Turns fantasy,—to expend the inertia large
Of large reserves of philosophic force,
Forced into play, the night's dream opening where
The day's work closes."
"Close work thus," he said;
"And all the measures of your verse may show

How sweet can be the echoes waked anon
By labor's ringing anvil."
"Nay," I sigh'd.
"Such work would bring too much of sleep,—no dreams.
When born with souls like harps the Muse should play,
What better can men do than toil to keep
Their thoughts and feelings closely tuned to truth?
For this will tax them wholly. They, who try,
With those few chords that fate has given them,
To string both harp and bow, may harm the one,
And may not help the other. We are men;
And straight and narrow must our pathways be.
If, Adam-like, we would be gods, we fall.
Not given to mortal is the life supreme,
In naught unbalanced, laden light in naught,
Existence evermore at equipoise,
Complete with that which on itself depends.
Oft, who his worth would double, nothing does
Except to break the back of worth that was,
While doubled burdens fall to doubled waste.
We men should humbler be, and pray to heaven
To have horizons hanging nearer us.
Our views too broad unfit us for the earth,
Yet fit us not for loneliness divine,—
The wide chill chaos, back behind the stars."

LIV.

Thus would I talk, and trouble Elbert much,
For he would rouse me in his rattling way :
"Why, Norman, you are hedging all our hopes.
Do not you pity moods that dote on you ?
If, man, your metaphysics be not yet
Beyond all physics, pray you, cure yourself ;
Be more material ; or material powers
Will alienated grow, and so forget
And count you out in all their reckonings ;
And you who are of earth, will earth own not ;
And you who would be heaven's, will heaven own not.
To own yourself and only own yourself,
Is worse than serfdom that has earn'd a smile,
Though but from wrinkling cheeks of sham good-will."

LV.

Then, through my gloom exploring for its cause,
His thought would light on Edith. He was right ;
Perhaps less right, grew garrulous of Grace.
For deeming love's return my only hope,
And, seeking this, resolved to find it too,
My slightest flush could furnish him a glow
As bright to light his pathway as the day.

Of course I could deny it ; say I held
No key to spring the latch of love like hers.

Our lips, e'en parting but to speak of love,
Infringe on Cupid ; and, before they close,
Some tingling arrow of that jealous god
Will make them drop all soberness.
He laugh'd :
" Now say you never saw the sea, for waves ;
Or stars, for twinkling ; or the trees, for leaves ;
But tell me not, you never saw the heart
That bosom heaves ; nor ever saw the play
Of faith and freak within that twinkling eye ;
Nor ever saw the spirit when the smile
That breaks in laughter shakes the form aside.
Come, friend, I know you better. Say you err ;
Or, by my soul, I never read you yet."

" And more," said I ; " she is not my ideal."

He laugh'd again : " Most men who court ideals
Have first their idol ; and, the false god fell'd,
Hoard then the fringe that dangled on its train,
And spend their lives in hunting other trains
To match but forms and colors of the first.
It strikes me, friend, that all things truthful grow.
E'en love outgrows the fashion of its youth :—
The world whirls on apace ; and different hues
Surround the noonday's sun. No dawn returns.
What form or color robes the infinite ?—
Yet aught to worship matches that alone.

So look you less for worship, than for worth.
You need a mate, friend ; not a mystery."

"A mate," I said, "but she for whims could waive
The truth whereto was anchor'd all my soul."

LVI.

Still Elbert parried me : "To hear you prate
Of truth—with women !—Why, you tried that once,
With Edith, not so ?—and she liked it, eh ?
Herself had love for this same truth ? — What then ?—
How very strange, when yesterday she pass'd,
She craved no more of it."
"She pass'd ?" I cried.

"Ay, ay," said he ; "while you, so wrapp'd in Grace,
Walk'd near, and noted nothing. How she laughed !—
Then spoke of 'haste, such haste, she could not stop' ;
And bade me 'not to tell' you.—Thus, you see,
I keep my word ; I promised nothing though."

At this, I blush'd ; it but encouraged him.

"This flame of sympathy you deem'd so bright
Extinguish'd was—you may have thought by me.

If so, I tell you, friend, 't was lightly done.
I but outblew you ; and the moral is :—
True flames, these women flicker with the wind.
But use you breath enough, their natures yield.
Yet blow for their sakes, not for your ideals.
One seldom finds a sweetheart sweet enough
To love her suitor's pinings for mere whims.
Nay, they alone our all-in-all would be ;
And so are jealous of our male ideals.
Then, too, they are creative less than we,
And cling more to the creature, love and serve
Embodied life that may be seen and felt.
You doubt me ?—Test it.—Read that rhyme you wrote,
Inspired by fancy.—Say so ;—still they hint.
'Ah, this was she, or she, whom once he loved.'
It may be, Grace does slight your love of truth.
If so, 't is better ; more you seem her own."

"More likely," cried I, "I and all my truth
Seem like champagne,—a thing that pops and shocks,
But yet enlivens when the hour is dull."

"She likes the shocking," said he. "Know you not
Most maids love mastery ? and the closest cling
To those who show the strength to hold them fast ?
Full many a suitor, when he wins his love,

Will treat her merely like some petted puss,
Caress, then cuff her, till she yields at last,
Won solely through his stronger wilfulness.
If one defers to her, she pities him ;
And names him friend, because she feels him frail.
Her favorite cavalier seems less a friend,
At first, than foe who stays the brunt in time
To seem to save her when she seems to fall."

" And should make him fall," cried I. " 'T is not strange
Such onsets numb her senses ! Heaven preserve
The world from women train'd to feel but weak,
Whose whole experience, nurtur'd not to think,
Is school'd to passions pert of dwarf'd desires,
Afraid of truth and dodging to deceit !
Let loose from home, their thing that ought to think
Is dry and hollow as a sounding-board
Behind a tongue that, like a weather vane,
Creaks with the windy scandal of the town
Till endless malice make our ear-drums ache,
At one spot hammer'd sore, and o'er and o'er,
With humdrum gossip of surrounding naught.
Small gain are they, to crown our courtships grand,
Prinked out with flowers and flattery ! Wise man ;
Flowers draw the bee, and flattery the fool.
One stings ; the other—Laugh not, Elbert, nay,
You know it well, what friendship craves ; and these,

These simpering women, testing manhood's woof
By worthless nap that tickles their vanity,—
O I shall wait some coming woman, I,
Who needs no suing since our spirits suit ;
Nor ruling either.—Love shall rule us both."

"You true Pygmalion," cried he, "make a maid !—
But all maids grow to us, when wedded once ;
So practical, they are, far more than men,
And yield to powers that be. Though caught, like fish,
Through bait they crave not ere men tender it,
They cleave to love once offer'd them ; nor turn,
Like male-friends, clinging—true as steel, forsooth—
To each new stronger magnet ! Were they thus,
Our homes might hardly hold our rivals there.
Accept the facts, friend ; in this world of reals,
Ideals must give way. So look to Grace,—
Despite your protests, just your mate ; and love
In maids like her is limitless when won.
You like her, too ; now, now"—

LVII.

And so we talk'd.
I never thought it meant much ; for we talk'd
Of all things, almost ; and, in play, at times,
Would I indulge in hopes that he was right.
Once too, far up in clouds, my fancy feign'd

To question if her friends, or she, would wish
My calling to be hers. I scarce had dream'd
Of Elbert's giving weight to whims like this.
Yet after that I mark'd him much with Grace ;
But naught surmised until, one time, he said :

" All right, my Norman ; I have talk'd with her ;
All but to tell her why I talk'd with her ;
And with her parents talk'd, and now they all
Agree in praising plans of life like yours ;
These latter actually sighing oft,
'Would we but had a son for work like this ! '
So, friend, your way is clear."

LVIII.

But was it clear ?—
So sure was it, that I could pluck this fruit ?
If sure, so sure the Eden open'd not
To tempt, as well as bless me ?—Could it be
That love could yet be mine ?—The hope was sweet ;
Yet strange ! — Why strange ? — The change ? —
Seem'd all change so ?—
Yet marriage ?—Why did mortals marry then ?—
For love, 't was said, for love. And what was
love ?
What more than liking well ?—Whom liked I so ;
And all in all, and always ?—Edith ?—What ?—
And liked her calling ?—If I liked not that,

I liked not her, not wholly. If not her,
Then liked I no one wholly ; and my will
In love, as in all other earthly states,
A choice must make,—take one of different boons,
And all imperfect. Why should not my love
Serve thus my judgment ? Grace could stand that test,
And life with one like her so sweet could be !

LIX.

I thought ; but all my thinking stirr'd but thought
Until, one time, I mused of other days ;
How once, and at the merest hint of love,
My younger blood, like some just conquering host
That trembling hope bears on, would bound through veins
That thrill'd and thrill'd as shook each trodden pulse ;
How, hot as deserts scorch'd by swift simoons,
And wild as forests swept by sudden blasts,
My frame would glow and bend at every breath
That tidings bore me of the soul I loved.
Love Grace did I ?—How then had love been tamed !
Mere self-control was it, that now, grown strong,
Had broken in, at last, that bounding blood,
And held the rein to joy ?—Ah, self-control,

The rest rheumatic of a zest grown old,
It came with time ; but mine had come from care.
Cold self-control, the curse of northern climes,
The artful despot of the Arctic heart,—
Before my summer scarce had warm'd me yet,
Was it to freeze me with its wintry clutch
Of colorless indifference ? chill and check
The springs of love till still'd in ice-like death ?

Woe me ! I sigh'd ; but then, with nobler cause,
More nobly moved, I mourn'd that older love.
It aye had come from regions far and pure,
From sacred heights of dream-land and desire,
And trailing light like Moses' from the mount,
With one hand clasping mine, one pointing up
To something earthly, yet more near the sky.
It aye had thrill'd the throbbing veins it near'd
And flush'd them proudly as the peasant's brow
When king's hands knight him, and he bears away
Ennobled blood forever.—My mood though —
This lax-limb'd, loitering, sisterly regard,
So cold, so calm, so cautious,—what was this ?—
To call it love my spirit could have swoon'd,
Shrunk like some parent's when he first has found
His fair babe's brain to be a gibbering blank.—
And then, down underneath my deep despair,
Where heaved a sigh that loosen'd all my soul,
Like kisses sweet of sudden death that draw

To sudden bliss, when men are snatch'd to heaven
From all the roar and rage of war, there came
One hope for Edith ;—and my shaken powers
Lost hold of Grace forever !

LX.

Still would doubt
Survive, and question if, when off my guard,
In fancy rampant, I had Grace deceived
As I had Elbert ? Could it be, indeed,
That I, who wish'd it not, had won her love ?
And if so, what ?—The problem wore me thin,
My witless self all whittled off, to point
This single question.
It was solved at last ;
I dropp'd a chance surmise,—how souls "should act,
In case they loved, and love were not return'd."

She arch'd her answer with so rare a blush,
That all my doubts dissolved ; and, catching truth
From hers contagious, like a boy confused,
All fused in frankness bubbling o'er the brim,
I blurted out about my older love ;
To root it out would root out love itself,
And not to do so, leave none else a place.

"I love not you ! " she cried, with look so changed,

My weight of shame had sunk me through the floor.
But, forced to words, like one some startle shocks,
I stammer'd, "Elbert!"—and was shock'd in truth;
For had I wrench'd it from her bodily,
Scarce redder had her flushing brow repell'd
My wresting rudely such a secret thence.
At one bound then my honor had return'd.
A bandit had I been, to force the spring
That lock'd her secret—but had spied her soul!—
And back to right it brought me. "Pardon, Grace,"
I breathed, then hush'd: With strange and holy power,
New-welling love seem'd fountain'd in my heart,
And shower'd and stream'd through all my thrilling veins;
And then I check'd it. She was not for me,
Alas, unworthy! She was Elbert's—all!

"Grace," said I, "you are doubly now my friend,
And doubly dear, since Elbert's dearest friend;
Thank Heaven that you have loved so true a man.
I go to him."
"Nay not to him," she urged.

But I, who seem'd to yield then to her wish,
Made loose the letter for the spirit's sake;—
Nor promised aught, unless he loved her not.

LXI.

But Elbert, found, the whole sweet truth confess'd,
With all his love for her so satisfied,
And all his sacrifice for me so clear,
I honor'd God the more from this, the hour
I found His honor so encased in man.
"Nay, thank me not," he said. "You brought me her.
Nor did I dream I loved her, ere I sought
Your cause to plead; and, aim'd for what it wills,
My will is wilful. There, you know the whole."
And soon, as if he fear'd our former strife
Were not yet still'd, "And you, perhaps, were right
With Edith, too," he said; "at least, were safe.
Still hold to truth. It now has saved us both."

LXII.

And then I learn'd—as other friends have learn'd—
Who with them strove to share my joy for them,
How much more joy was theirs, when theirs alone.
But this could scarcely turn my thought aside
From self, left lonelier now than e'er before.
I strove to drown my grief in work. The work
Was but a worm's that eats from day to day
The morrow's bed, at morning dragging on
A soulless trunk, through troubles void of hope.

My soul with startled sighs seem'd roused alone

When Edith cross'd my vision. Then my mood,
As gloom would gather round again, would grieve
To think, in sorting souls, fate bungled so,
And let our traits be judged of by our trades,—
The dusty imprint of the things we touch'd.
"As well," I cried, "to judge of winds of heaven,
By bogs they brush, or fogs they bear away!
We two that so could trust each other's hearts,
Why should we not join hearts, and leave to them
The hands? If wiser than the world we were,
Why should we act, forsooth, in worldly ways?
What need that all should don the uniform
That fits men for the social march of fools?
What need?—Ah me," I thought, "all need, indeed,
If one wish influence in the world or church.—
Or church!—Must it then crucify the soul
To save appearances? the body? form?
The Christ gave up all these to save the soul.
'T is treason when His churches join the world,
And courting smiles from bigotry appeased,
And grinning hell that holds the whole its own,
Preach up the crucifixion of the soul
To save the body, save the outward form.
A church is His no more, whose rites or creeds
Keep souls untrue to truth within that shows
God's tempering there, the touch that makes man man."

LXIII.

I swore it should not be, it could not be ;
No life could so be cleansed,—by wringing thence
The blood that warms the heart ; no face made pure
By turning pale the blush of beauty cast
By shadows where sweet love goes in and out.
Love, love should never be a slave, but free.—
"Come, Edith !"—Then I question'd, Would she come ?—
Nay, not to my life. Mine must go to hers.
But this, mine could not,—could do nothing there ;—
And would not !—Whence then sprang my call to her ?—
If not from reason, from my wish, forsooth.—
My wish for what ?—for her ? and as she was ?—
Not so ; but as she might be.—Whence then sprang
This 'might be' ?—whence, alas, but from myself,
As I kept moulding it within my soul ?
Why rail'd I, then, against the church and world ?—
Not these alone, but I would have her changed.
These all but echoed back my own soul's voice ;
And yet, augmented by the voice of all,
In heeding them, I heeded not myself,
But something greater, grander than myself.
For if a single man may image God,
Then many men who join their partial gifts
And parted wisdom,—till the whole become

Not merely human but humanity's,—
May watch our ways and keep us circumspect
With eyes that often wellnigh stand for His
Who still more fully in mankind than man
Rules over truth in each through truth in all.
Why term me slave, then, when I serve my kind?—
Through serving it, I best may serve, as well,
My godlier self!—Let general thought take shape;
What better can incarnate sovereignty?
What stir to nobler dreams or grander deeds?
The soul in reverence may kneel to it,
Yield all to it.—So may my neighbors reign,
And I may be their slave, yet own myself;
And deify, while I defy my pride!

## LXIV.

A new conversion, say you?—call it so.
The truth converts one oft, if he be true.
The true man loves his own, and fights for it;
And, since his own is small and God's is large,
He often fights to fall. Yet ranks on high
Are throng'd with heroes now, whose slender blades
Were wielded but for slender causes once;
Nor sheathed, till flying shatter'd from their grasp,
Till truth they fought had proved too strong for them.
Then, when they knew themselves, and knew the truth,

And knew its mercy too, they loved the truth,
And came to be its champions, evermore.
So now with me : rebellious though I was,
Rebellion wrought my rescue. Truth loom'd large ;
And Duty rose in all her royal right,
Till loyalty seem'd grandeur. Work began.
Thank God, we all have heads above our hearts ;
And, if we let them reason with us well,
They rule us for our best.

LXV.

What Elbert wish'd,
When first I cross'd the sea, was more than wrought.
I brought back not alone what books could give,
But in myself a sense of others' wants,—
For in my heart a wondrous wealth of love ;
Ay, wealth it was ; though, like the ore in mines,
It only proved that that which lived had died.
What though my life, complete with her alone,
Seem'd always rent ? a weight of broken quartz
That only gleam'd where it had fractur'd been ?
That weight was wealth that sparkled back to greet
Each gleam of sunshine.
Thus I found that love
At times may prove a treasure even dead,
If dead enough in spirits yet alive.

Mine, thwarted so, had made me more the man
That Elbert wish'd,—a man for all mankind :—
No special pleader for a special class
Whose grasping greed crowds out the general good ;—
But one who pleads for all fair rights for all ;
Nor bides content when tones have died away
That can but once repeat, then die away,
The echoes borne to reach that shore of truth
Where he alone has listen'd. These seem'd worth
Words, rarely wrought as ocean shells that store
Unending rumors of the ended wave.

## LXVI.

Anon it happen'd that through others' hands
My tales, pour'd forth to voice my loneliness
In echoing talk and song, had pass'd to plays,
And then been set to music ; and, in time,
Arose like sighings of a human wind
Above a human sea, where under them
There swept, like surgings of a rhythmic surf,
The shifting scenes and singers of the stage.
And, chief of all the singers in those throngs,
Who best of all could body forth the truth
That most of all had seem'd to be inspired
By Edith's spirit, while in all I thought
Her love had ever lured expression on,
Was she herself.

LXVII.

But love outstrips my tale.
Erelong, from shores where surged this surf of song,
Like gems the ocean casts upon its coast,
About me lay a growing store of wealth.
And then, with broaden'd means, intent to push
Toward broaden'd purposes, I spoke and wrote;
And found, anon, while aiding here and there
Where aid was rare, wide opening to my view,
A worthiest mission in this new reform
That seeks to make the server and the served
Walk hand in hand, while wage gives way to share,
And, furthering all men to their furthest due,
Thus lifts the low and lost.

LXVIII.

At last, one day,
There came a letter from our bureau's head,
With it, another, sent him, so he wrote,
"By some enthusiast, a character—
A woman, and a woman too of mind;
And yet, withal, who had been strangely led,
Through doubtful ways, he thought, toward doubtful ends,
Till doubts had wrought reaction,—as when clouds
That course on clouds, at last, bring lightnings forth
That clear them off. And now her vision, clear'd,

Had found within her soul a wish to work,—
In new ways truly for a cause like ours,—
For us and with us. But I held her note,
She dwelt near by me: could I visit her?
And give my judgment then?"

LXIX.

This note, thus sent,
Was—would you guess it?—Edith's. What she wrote,
Weighs love against all liking to this hour.
All thrill'd with hope, yet trembling for my fate,
I spell'd out all her tale:—"Her sire—his aims—
And her fulfilment of them—her success—
Earth seem'd a kingdom prostrate at her feet,
And she, a queen; alas, but, like a queen,
Was doom'd to hold a throne that rivals watch'd,
To spy her weakness out, and wrest away
A power that could be kept by power alone.—
How sad for woman when her hopes were based
On practice that must all her heart conceal,
That must be conquering ever or be crush'd!
At first her love for art had kept her up,—
And for success, and for a sister dear,
Who shared her earnings, who, while cheer'd the crowds,
At last, had died, and left her all alone.
And, after that, her soul had loathed applause,

Had found her nature so belied, misjudged,
Her life the embodiment of hollow sound,
And all surroundings echoing back but sound,
Chill admiration in the place of love,
Her friends but flatterers, and herself unknown.

"With this, her world had grown so hard, so parch'd,
Without one source affording sympathy—
She took no credit to herself for aught;
The weakest sigh that could have heaved a breast,
A dying breast, had crack'd so dry a crust—
She rose, one morn, and swore to free her soul,
Whose pent-up love in softening streams should flow
Till something human, ay, and heavenly, too,
Were nurtured by the wish from which it sprang.

"She could not work now for herself alone;
For she had learn'd that all life's purposes
Are held like lenses that a soul may use
To gather in heaven's light and flash it round
Upon its world illumin'd; or, not so,—
If turn'd on self,—to but inflame and dim
Its own self-seeking vision. So she now
One only purpose knew,—to pledge her gifts
To those who most might need them; and she came,
With all she was and all she hoped to be,
Her gifts of nature and her skill in art,

To work for us, whose aims were plann'd so well,
To further all men to their furthest due,
And lift the low and lost."

LXX.

And then I rode,
As fast as trains could take me ; and I wrote,
Like one intoxicated, from the inn :
"The bureau's agent here abides your wish" ;
And, signing not my name, awaited thus
The summons sure to seem more sweet than life.
It came. I went.

"You?" Edith cried, "and whence?"
"From whence?" I said. "Each slightest spark of good
Flies upward, and the heaven returns it where
It fires the most?—and where were tinder found
Like my heart?"
"Why is this?" she ask'd ; "My note—
Did it miscarry?—Would you thwart me now—
Or, though my gifts could aid them, do they wish
No help from me?—My heart was set on it."

"On my cause," said I. "Did you never think
That work with them would make you work with me?"

"Why think of this?" she ask'd.—"Enough to know
I sought my own work here."

"Why, Edith, friend,"
I answer'd—"Why could not your work be mine?
What parts us now? What though, like mine, your soul
Had learn'd to look down life's long vista, too,
And watch yourself alone. Why bide alone?
I, I, at least, through all these years have seen—
Not you yourself, for that too dear had been!—
But I have seen a vision, seeming you
Within the far horizon of my hopes,
The sweet mirage before me. Now, at last,
I know those misty outlines veil'd the truth;
It must have meant that you would yet be found—
That we should meet. Heaven surely meant it so."

## LXXI.

Her mien had chang'd; and yet she ask'd again,
"But how with Grace? I thought"—
"Alas," I said,
"With your dear spirit thron'd above my love,
What were I but a traitor, wedding Grace?
This heart was yours, your dwelling-place alone.
Nay, now I do not come to give it you:
It only opens to an owner old.
How sacredly I guarded it for you!—
A holy place, though there, above the shrine,
The niche was empty. Ah, has earth seem'd rude?
Some reason was there; surely there was some.

We war with Providence, who war with life.
We seek to mould our own existence out;
But life, best made, is mainly for us made.
Each passing circumstance, a tool of heaven,
Is sent to smooth some edge of character,
And model manhood into better shape.
Has nought been wrought with you? Ah, idol mine,
You living image of all hope, would God,
Love's shrine, and empty niche, might stand complete!"

## LXXII.

Then Edith lean'd her face against her hand,
And slowly came the words that seem'd so dear:
"It may be, Norman, may—I know—I feel—
It must be earth, so roughly handling one,
Should round experience for some wise design.
Yet this—it cannot be—how can it?—nay—
For me you come—and you? your voice I hear?
No echo void, oft, oft so sweet in dreams?—
Nor now to wake me?—Nay I trust. You may—
'T will stray no more—take back your wanderer."

"My wanderer!" I answer'd, when I could;
"Ah Edith, you but wander'd as the lamb;
My spotless, worldling-mediator, you!—
It wander'd?—yes; it cross'd a threshold chill;

A proud cathedral enter'd ; there found one
Too pleased with what he had, to gaze outside.
To him those arches low seem'd high as heaven ;
And all the sweet and sunny air without,
When strain'd through stain'd and smoke-wreathed window-panes,
Gleam'd lurid as were hell. This man spied you :
He saw you shun him—leave him. He pursued—
Out, past the doorway—and he found God's world
So much more broad than walls named after Him ! "

## LXXIII.

"And Norman," said she, "think you, evermore,
Recalling you, the worldling could forget
How walls exclusive could exclude not love ?
Or, love rejecting, gain from all the world,
Though brimm'd with but applause, one draft so sweet ?—
But then earth held such promises, so lured ;
How could I know that merely sighs there were
Could thrill me more than all its thunders could ?
Ah, did I love you then, so loves he heaven
Who has not courage yet to leave the world.
I might have left it never ; but, you know,
That sister mine—Alas, why lived I, left
To envy that cold tomb, all night, all day,
That held her only ?—Norman, pardon me :

Such woe, such loneliness,—ah, strange was it
That oft then I recall'd your form, your words?
And when I render'd forth upon the stage
Scenes you had visioned, phrases you had fram'd,
That then I came to do as you would do,
And think as you would think?—or that my lips
Should linger o'er your language, as o'er sweets
Re-tasted still again?—or that, anon,
Those accents ardent with your own dear aims,
Should fire mine own to ardor?—or that then
My soul should flash forth light that flamed within,
And tracing far the rays that left desire,
Should find here"—

"One to help you, friend?" I asked—
"Then let us both thank heaven that made us weak.
So may a mortal pair bide, each to each,
Both priest and partner; like the church, their home;
For what are churches here but chosen courts
Of One pure Spirit, moving all to love?
And, think you, writ or vestment, art or arch,
Can image Him, or His domain unbound?
Nay, trust my word, we worship Him the best,
When two or three together, loving truth
And one another, thus repeat, once more,
An incarnation, imitating Christ."

LXXIV.

"I catch it, Norman," cried she, "the ideal!
Henceforth our aim be this,—the art of life.
I saw it not before: the spirit's stage
Is so much broader than the stage of earth.
Comes on the soul now, actor, all divine,
At play no longer; nay, but shadowing forth
A love complete that personates a God!
And what love is complete that walks alone?"

"None," answer'd I. "In true love, hand in hand,
Each leads his like. For this the whole world waits.
It waits for love,—why say not love like ours?
When souls touch souls, they touch the springs of life;
For them the veils of sense are drawn aside,
Are burn'd away in radiance divine,
The while their spirit's contact starts afresh
The electric flash that scores new glory here,
And lights the lines of being back to God.
Then, while their whole existence seems renew'd,
Far up these lines, the souls that thus commune,
Discern anon that sacred home on high,
Where boundless rest is blest by boundless love
And dreams the dreams of bounty absolute.—
They find that home, whence issue floods of light,
Which, flowing forth from white mysterious heights,

Flame down and flash and burst anon in sparks
That star the dark through all life's firmament ;—
They find that home, whence whirl those cycles wide
Where all the wastes of nature fuse and form,
And all the things that thought can touch take shape,
Until the restless wheels of matter, roll'd
Through roadways worn to waste by speeding years,
At last in fatal friction fire themselves,
And light returns to light from whence it sprang.
Through all, where souls commune with central love,
They rest secure, awaiting birth or death ;
The Spring that bursts in blossoms blown to fall,
Or Fall that drops the seed that springs afresh.
They watch, nor fear whatever change evolve,—
The splendor grand of epochs swept to waste,
The ruin wild of times that tend to law,
The monarch mail'd whose lustre dims his folk,
The people's guns whose smoke would dim their king.
What though dark clouds loom up and storms descend ?
True faith would not bemoan the forms they wreck ;
For forms if true are formulas of love
That still is ardent to consume them all.
Though lightnings thunder till they crack the sky,

What unroofs rage leaves heaven to dome our peace.
The more convulsion shakes and fire consumes,
The more of love and light may both set free ;
The earlier may they end these earthly days
That fret our lives with flickerings vague below
Of steadfast light in endless day above ;
The earlier may the power of hate give way,
And good awake, and all the ways grow bright,
While hopes of glory gild the gloom on high.
We too—come, Edith. Christ will go with us ;
And by and by the glory so shall flame
Heaven cannot hold the halo !—Edith, come ;
We join the plans above."

## LXXV.

But hold—I rave—
I know, I know—no matter, so would you.—
But find your soul's ideal, and you would find,
If common-sense be reason, you would rave,
Till you forgot that common-sense could be—
Though I forget it not. My tale is told.
Why talk I more ? I know one household now
All radiant through its mistress ! Where she dwells
A sweet content pervades the very air,
And genial sympathy smiles on to make
Each whole long year one summer of delight.

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